



MONTANA

the magazine of western history

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MONTANA

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ABOUT THE COVER: We are delighted to reproduce this provocative depiction of Montana deer at Yuletide, a dynamic Western Wildlife painting by Wolfgang Pogzeba, young Denver artist. The Historical Society of Montana was privileged to exhibit Pogzeba's fresh approach to wildlife painting in October and November, 1960. The result of this show has been a growing interest in the imaginative work of a young artist who is an amalgam of the ancient culture of Europe and the fresh individualism of a new generation of American artists. His father, John Pogzeba, director of the Pogzeba Galleries in Denver, is a member of a German refugee family which suffered cruelly under the Nazi regime. A distinguished curator and art restorer, the elder Pogzeba exposed his son to the art culture of Europe. Wolf spent 1958 on the Continent, studying at some of the great centers. The young artist returned, determined to devote himself entirely to portraying the natural beauty and wildlife of Western America. That he is succeeding well is attested by the interest his work is creating, not only in the West but in New York as well, where two shows are currently scheduled, a December showing at the Leonard Hutton Galleries and an early spring exhibit at the Kennedy Galleries.

MONTANA the magazine of western history

Our Purpose: To Preserve, Publish, Promote and Perpetuate Western History . . .

Volume Eleven

Number One

January, 1961

IN THIS ISSUE

- Slow Boat to Benton.....by Dorothy M. Johnson 2
Mrs. Wilbur Fisk Sanders' diary reveals tedium and concern for her family on a long trip "home from the States" in 1867.

- Colorado Catastrophe.....by Samuel C. Blessing 12
John C. Fremont's harrowing and unsuccessful attempt to cross the Rockies in the terrible winter of 1848 is graphically recounted.

- Letter From Col. W. F. Sanders.....from The Historical Society Archives 24
"Major" E. G. Brooke, staunch Democrat, receives outspoken political advice from his Republican friend in 1891.

- The Magic of James Willard Schultz.....Reactions from Our Readers 27

- Muddled Men Have Muddled the Yellowstone's True Colors by Mark H. Brown 23
A distinguished historian's research into Yellowstone history points up some often-compounded errors in historical fact.

- From Butcher Boy to Buffalo Hunter.....the Journals of Henry Bierman 38
The frontier adventures of resourceful Henry Bierman, told in his own words and climaxed by a charming epilogue by his daughter.

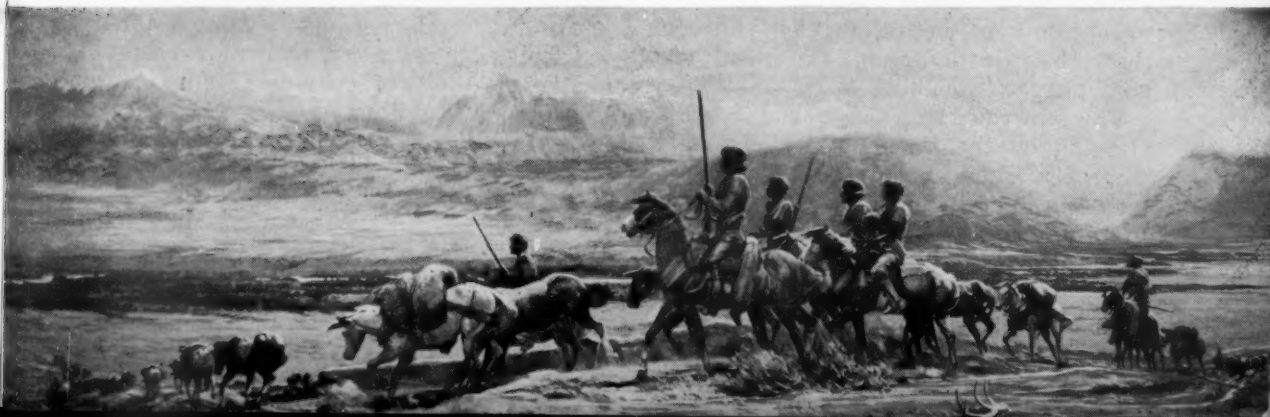
SPECIAL BONUS SECTION: TWO NEW FEATURES

- Historic St. Peter's Mission.....by Wilfred P. Schoenberg, S.J. 68
Crumbling stone ruins and an old white log church stand as reminders of Jesuit and Ursuline efforts among the Blackfeet of Montana Territory.

- The Justin Boot.....An historical vignette 86
The first of a new series of short features from our files tells of one western item so excellent that it achieved dictionary status.

- Reader's Remuda.....60
Forty Years Among the Indians: A True Yet Thrilling Narrative of the Author's Experiences Among the Natives by Daniel W. Jones; *Following the Indian Wars: The Story of the Newspaper Correspondents Among the Indian Campaigners* by Oliver Knight; *Son of the Gambler's Man* by Mari Sandoz; *Tularosa, Last of the Frontier West* by C. L. Sonnichsen; *The Mormon Conflict* by Norman F. Furniss; *Handcarts to Zion* by LeRoy R. and Ann Hafen; *Recollections of Early Texas* by John Holland Jenkins, edited by John Holmes Jenkins III.

- Bits from the Editor's Mail Pouch.....66



Slow Boat To Benton



by Dorothy M. Johnson

IN FEBRUARY, 1866, Wilbur Fisk Sanders and his wife and their two little boys, James and Wilbur, left their home in Virginia City, Montana Territory, to visit relatives back in the states. Friends gave them an appropriate *bon voyage* present, according to a journal that Mrs. Sanders kept: a beautiful gold nugget "weighing \$205."

They traveled by sleigh and coach, sleeping on the floor in blankets and fur robes. They left home February 21, and March 9 had been on the coach night and day for 16 days except for a brief stop in Salt Lake City, where

Brigham Young and his 31 wives were among the sights Mrs. Sanders noted. She was happily surprised at how well her little boys were behaving. She noted March 7, "Strange as it may seem we are having a most comfortable journey . . . I cannot but wonder if we shall ever see a r.r. so far west as M.T."—meaning, of course, a railroad to Montana Territory.

At Atchison, March 14, they took a train and reached their destination—her journal doesn't say what it was—March 17, 1866.

The Diary of Mrs. Wilbur Fisk Sanders, Written 93 Years Ago, Reveals Tedium and Concern For Her Family on a Long Journey Home

But returning to Montana, slightly more than a year later, was a different matter. This time Mrs. Sanders' mother was along, also a youth called Eddie, who undoubtedly was her nephew, James Edward Upson, son of James and Clarinda Fenn Upson. Mrs. Upson was Mrs. Sanders' sister. Probably because Mrs. Sanders' mother, Mrs. Fenn, was in the party, they went home the easy way, by Missouri River steamboat—and how appallingly slow and tedious it was!

Mrs. Sanders kept a written record of this journey, too. She called it "Journal of a Trip from Ohio to Montana Ty. in the summer of 1867 via Chicago, St. Joe and the Missouri River, on board Steamer Abeona, Ft. Benton and Helena to Virginia City, by Mrs. H. P. Sanders of Montana." The H. P. stands for her given names, Harriet Peck.

The Sanders party boarded the *Abeona* at St. Joe, Missouri, April 24. The next day, Mrs. Sanders noted, was her birthday; she was 33. This day comes a hint of the exasperation of river travel with which she became better acquainted later on: the *Abeona* was in sight of the *Amaranth*, which had left St. Louis two weeks ahead of her!

Next day they passed the *Amaranth*. The river current was so strong that "the men are obliged to warp to move the boat that is tie the rope to trees and pull." When they reached Nebraska City, Mr. Sanders (she never calls him Wilbur) and Eddie went up town. No fear that the boat would go off and leave them—no, indeed. This is what river travel was like:

Sun. 28th. On a sand bar for nearly an hour this A.M. The wind rose before noon and we were obliged to tie up all day.

WINTER 1961

Mon. 29th. Another wind storm today. It is impossible for the boat to move. Are tied up all day.

Next day they reached Omaha, went up town and did some shopping. Mr. Sanders bought a box of apples and some lemons for the family and parted from them to go back to St. Joe and "Winthrop" by rail and thence to Montana the fast way, by coach.

May 1, the *Abeona* was 65 miles beyond Omaha. But next day the paddle wheel was broken and the boat waited for repairs. May 3 they were off and away. The *Abeona* passed the *Antelope* and the *Amaranth*, running side by side with the latter for some time and nearly getting hit. Steamboats, when they could move at all, often raced—and never mind how the lady passengers felt about the danger.

May 4 the *Abeona* started at daylight but at 8 A. M. tied up for the day. A tree struck the guard rail and broke it away and went through the cook's

This is the first in a series of three amusing sketches written by Montana's able Dorothy Johnson, based on the journals of James U. Sanders, son of Colonel and Mrs. Wilbur Fisk Sanders. This episode is from a diary kept by Mrs. Sanders during the tedious 1867 trip home to Virginia City, M. T., after a year's visit in Ohio and other eastern states. It was copied nine years later by James and is included in his historic manuscript book, now owned by W. H. Bertsche, Jr. of Great Falls.

In subsequent issues we will publish an intimate account of James' life as a Helena teenager in 1875; and a memorable trip with his father to Philadelphia in 1876 to attend the nation's Centennial observance and the Republican National Convention in Cincinnati.

James Upson Sanders, who died in 1923 after an automobile accident, carried on the illustrious tradition of his family. A respected attorney, he became librarian for the Historical Society of Montana and also served for many years as secretary of the Society of Montana Pioneers. We are grateful to Mr. Bertsche for making the original manuscript available to the lucid pen of Miss Johnson, who needs no introduction to our readers.



BENTON II, steamer of the T. C. Power "Block P" line, is tied up at the Fort Benton levee at about the same spot where Thomas Francis Meagher, acting governor of Montana, mysteriously drowned in 1867. Mrs. W. F. Sanders and her family were making their way up the river by slow steamer when word came of the tragedy, and Mrs. Sanders took note of the event in her diary. (Historical Society of Montana photo)

room. The passengers got off for a nice walk, and the *Antelope* passed the *Abeona*.

But the day after, they passed the *Antelope*, tied up in the morning on account of wind, and were passed by the *Gallatin*. Mrs. Sanders noted that they had been five days going 100 miles.

In Sioux City, on the 7th, she bought and trimmed a hat for herself, and Eddie lost his. May 8, the *Abeona* was on a sandbar all day and the *Ida Stockdale* passed it. On the 10th, during a stop in Yankton, Eddie bought a hat. At Bonhomme Island they saw the *Big Horn* laid up with a burst steam pipe and the *Benton*, *Gallatin* and *Ida Stockdale* all aground.

So the *Abeona* went cautiously on the other side of the island, where the water was six inches deeper, but it took all one day for the men to pull the boat three times its own length over sandbars. The *Abeona* got into four feet of water—and then ran out of wood for the boiler, so the men went ashore to get some.

Missouri River steamboats lived off the country as to fuel. The average

boat burned about 30 cords of cottonwood in 24 hours of steaming. Below Fort Randall there were wood yards; above that, they were scarce, and the hardy men who dared cut firewood for sale to hungry steamboats could get \$8 a cord for it—if they lived. In 1868 alone, seven of these wood hawks were killed by Indians between Fort Benton and the downriver settlements.

May 13, "We passed the Yankton Agency at ten this A. M. and Fort Randall at five P. M. Mailed a despatch to Mr. Sanders. Any number of Indians all along the bank today and Indian graves in the air." Next day the boat tied up all day because of wind but made ten miles in early morning and late evening.

On the 15th, Mrs. Sanders mentions, not for the first time, that "we are making very poor time" and comments wistfully that "Mr. Sanders is in Virginia City tonight I think." (He wasn't. He got there May 31.)

Then, day after day, it's sandbars and delay. On the 20th, the *Abeona* broke one rudder and the wheel and lost another rudder, tied up all day for a new rudder to be made, and "Eddie got into the river."

On the 22d, four weeks after leaving St. Joe, they passed old Fort Sully and saw some elk. Next day one of the boilers burnt through and the boat tied up again. Everybody went ashore, the men to hunt antelope. Mrs. Sanders and five other passengers "took a boat ride." This is, of course, what they had been doing for the past month.

Next day the *Antelope* passed them and the boiler wasn't mended yet. The *Benton* passed them. The *Abeona* passengers all went out on the hills. On the 25th, the men killed three large rattlesnakes, four more steamers passed, and the *Abeona's* delay was getting maddening, because the river was high, and high water was a requirement for reaching Fort Benton. On the 26th they made 25 miles, passing new Fort Sully. The day after, they passed two of the boats that had passed them. Mrs. Sanders had a toothache and a fever. She noted this without complaint.

Harriet Peck Fenn Sanders was not a complaining woman. Her journal never expresses concern about danger from Indians or damage to the steamboat. Those were problems for the menfolks. Harriet's business was to look after her family.

May 28, "Alarm of Indians, they have attacked two boats, and killed one man. Our men shot a beaver." With four other steamers, the *Abeona* was tied up and the men couldn't find the channel. Furthermore, the river was falling. But they had passed the Little Cheyenne River.

On the 29th, Mrs. Sanders unpacked the "fruit trunk" to keep her boys happy. The *Abeona* passed three other boats and tied up by the Moreau River. Next day they made fifty miles and passed the *Trover* and the *Big Horn*, but these boats passed them the day after because the *Abeona* had to stop while the men brought wood from a mile away.

June 1 they stopped an hour for fog, two hours for wood. The *Trover* passed them after a long race and caught fire

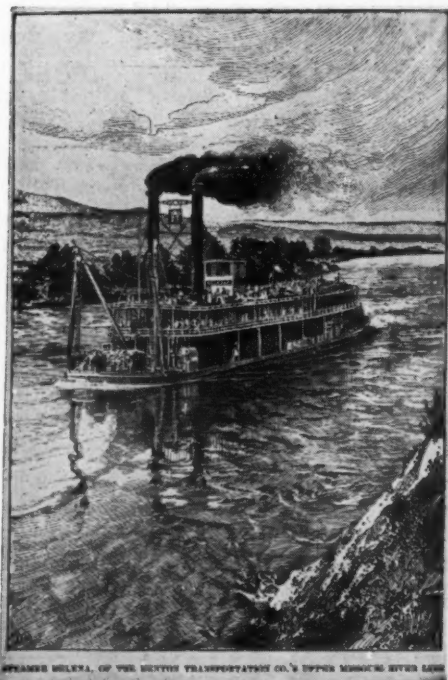
back of the pilot house. Willie was quite sick, his mother noted.

June 2 they stopped at Fort Rice, which had been attacked by Indians three weeks before. "Mr. English read service this evening," it being Sunday, but not many passengers attended. (When Mrs. Sanders was in a proper town, she went to church twice on Sunday and to prayer meeting during the week.)

Next day, a deck hand named Johnston fell overboard while chopping wood. Mr. English saw him go. Some of the men went out in a small boat to search for Johnston, but they never found him. "Poor fellow," wrote Mrs. Sanders.

June 4, they stopped briefly for wood but made 65 miles. It was hot—109 in the sun.

Next day they stopped at Fort Berthold, and Mrs. Sanders noted "a call from Messrs. Tutt, Russell, McCormick, Gov. Smith, Col. McLane, Judge Davis," who were traveling on the *Octavia*. (Green Clay Smith had been appointed territorial governor of Montana by President Johnson in 1866.



STEAMER ABEONA, OF THE MONTANA TRANSPORTATION CO.'S UPPER MISSOURI RIVER LINE



JAMES U. SANDERS, who became Historical Society of Montana librarian, transcribed his mother's 1867 diary into a manuscript book now owned by W. H. Bertsche of Great Falls from which Miss Johnson has extracted this and two other events from the lives of the Sanders family.



WILBUR E. SANDERS, always called "Willie" by his family, was one of two small sons whom Mrs. Sanders had to keep happy and occupied on the long steamer trip to Fort Benton. Willie was two years younger than his brother, James. Another son, Louis, had not yet been born at the time of the 1867 adventure.

(Historical Society of Montana photos.)

His predecessor, Montana's first governor, was Sidney Edgerton, an uncle of Mrs. Sanders' husband.)

June 6 the *Abeona* passed the Little Missouri River in an all-day rain. Wind delayed them the following day, but they met two boats coming downriver and had the welcome news that there was plenty of water upstream.

For several days they kept meeting boats coming downriver. The upper Missouri River was no lonely road! It was a superhighway, and the traffic on it was tremendous by 1867. (A pageant-drama by Prof. Bert Hansen of Montana State University on July 2, 3, and 4, 1960, at Fort Benton, celebrated the centennial of the arrival of the very first steamboat at Fort Benton on July 2, 1860.) Mrs. Sanders was traveling in the biggest year of steamboating up to Benton. There were times that year when thirty or forty steamboats were on the river between Fort Benton and the mouth of the Yellowstone.

There was always something to look at, although it wasn't necessarily what the passengers really wanted to see.

Mrs. Sanders noted wolves, Indians, buffalo and antelope, but she didn't get enthusiastic about the scenery until the *Abeona* was nearing Fort Benton and she felt that the tedious journey might actually come to an end.

June 10, the *Abeona* tied up to the bank, which fell in and broke the fantail and 20 feet of guard rail. Next day the men shot two deer in the river but they sank before a small boat could reach them. Passengers sat out on the deck in the evening and listened to two men singing. Eddie "with others" shot a buffalo on the bank, and somebody went out in a small boat and brought it in.

June 13, they reached Fort Buford and mailed some letters, passed the mouth of the Yellowstone river, hit the bank and broke the fantail again (it took three hours to repair), and there were plenty of Indians around. They passed Fort Union at six P. M.

Next day the *Abeona* raced with the *Trover*, hit three times and broke two posts. "Mother, Mrs. Isaacs, Mrs.



JAMES EDWARD UPSON, son of Mrs. Sanders' sister, was undoubtedly the boy "Eddie" mentioned in her diary. Eddie was 14 years old when this picture was taken in Virginia City on May 16, 1858. He was the son of James and Clarinda Fenn Upson.
(Historical Society of Montana photo.)



MRS. WILBUR FISK SANDERS, the former Harriet Peck Fenn, had the usual worries of a 33-year-old mother on a long trip with young children when she wrote her diary in 1867. This portrait was taken in Washington, D. C., after her husband had become U. S. Senator from Montana.
(Historical Society photo.)

Houghton, Miss Hopkins went over onto *Trover* had a pleasant call." Travel was slow, but social life was brisk.

The *Abeona* met the *Amelia Poe*, with Mr. Isaacs on board, on June 15. He said he had left Mr. Sanders at Fort Benton. Passengers went visiting on the *Mountaineer* (which carried eight buffalo calves along with passengers and freight), and Mrs. Sanders had a letter from her husband. He was coming downriver and would meet her the following day.

On the 16th, sure enough, Mr. Sanders arrived on the *Yorktown*, bringing "a nice roast," which Mrs. Sanders does not say anything more about. There is no mention in her journal of the food served on the *Abeona*. Presumably there was plenty of meat, with all that game the men kept knocking off.

Next day they saw two "large drove of buffalo," the Sanders and Isaacs couples went ashore to see some trees cut down by beaver, and the scenery was fine. The *Abeona* passed Milk River at 11 A. M. the following day, taking two hours to find a channel.

The *Abeona* and the *Trover* had a long race; the *Trover* was hit twice and got its guard rail broken. Three ladies from the *Trover* came over to call.

On the 19th, the *Abeona* stuck on a sandbar and had to wait until the current washed it away. But "all hands had a good song out on ground in the evening."

Next day the boiler burnt through and the river was falling two inches every 15 minutes. But the *Abeona* started again and passed the *Trover*, high and dry. While her engine was being mended, the river had fallen so fast that she was stranded.

This same day, Mrs. Sanders makes a most remarkable statement:

"Mike caught a swordfish of twenty five pounds. Mr. Sanders shot it and Mike jumped in and caught it. Its mouth is as large as Jimmie's head."

Harriet Sanders was a serious reporter of serious events. She did not go off in flights of fancy. But what was a swordfish doing in the Missouri River? The Montana Department of Fish and Game solved this mystery; it



ARTIST KARL BODMER portrayed the steamer "Yellowstone" making its torturous way up the Yellowstone near Fort Union in 1833. (Historical Society of Montana collection)

was probably a paddle fish, also known as a spoonbill cat. They're still to be found in Fort Peck Reservoir and downstream in the Missouri, but nobody cares very much.

June 24 the boat stopped for thirteen hours to "wood up." It stuck on a sandbar all the next day, and now comes the first sign of complaint from Harriet Sanders:

"All got the blues. Have thrown off every stick of wood that the men cut yesterday from six A. M. to seven P. M."

So the day after that they had to stop, after going a few miles, to wood up and mend the boiler again. On the 27th they wooded all day about Harriet Island. "All the men helped to draw in twenty loads, have all the boat will carry."

They reached Cow Island next day, and it was a warm one—114 in the shade.

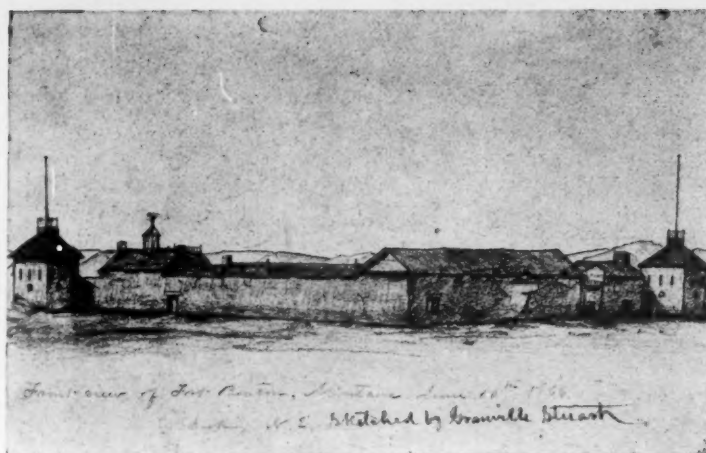
On June 30 there was excitement. The men shot at three buffalo swimming in the river and got two of them. The third escaped onto the bank and took after the men on shore. The hunters prudently scattered. "One dropped his gun and climbed a tree in about no time," wrote Mrs. Sanders with a smile. "He was nearly frightened to death."

Now, close enough to Fort Benton to feel that she was really going to get there while she was still thirty-three, she comments on the scenery: "Beautiful scenery, castles, etc. along the river." But there was also trouble:

"Reached Bird's Rapids at seven P.M. Tried to rope up. Mr. Sanders and four others were left on opposite shore. Our boat dashed against the perpendicular wall of rocks on the bank and broke it some and the 'nigger.' I did not go to bed till half past two in the morning, when we got over the rapids and sent a small boat across for the men. They built a large fire last night on the shore." She says not a word about being worried, but why else did she stay up until half past two?

Next day the *Abeona* stopped again to wood up. A deserter from Camp Cook, fifty miles upriver, arrived in a small boat and came aboard. The steamer reached Camp Cook the following day. Mrs. Sanders doesn't say whether the deserter was greeted with joy or by a firing squad. Here the boat unloaded eighty tons of freight, and Col. Sanders walked three miles to another boat, the *Gallatin*, so as to reach Fort Benton ahead of his family and engage coach passage for them.

FORT BENTON in 1866 was sketched by Granville Stuart. This was the era of greatest activity at Fort Benton, head of navigation of the Missouri River, when from 30 to 40 steamboats at a time plied the waters between here and the mouth of the Yellowstone. (Historical Society of Montana collection)



The Missouri made trouble on July 1; the crew worked for three hours roping the *Abeona* up Drowned Man's Rapids. Wood was scarce; the men had to carry it half a mile. The hungry boilers used up all the fuel in making thirty miles, but at least the *Abeona* had got past the rapids. They left the *Tacony* behind, still in trouble there.

On July 2 the *Abeona* stopped all day to wood up; this time wood was a whole mile away. Some of the steamer hands deserted, starting for Benton on foot with a few crackers in their pockets for provisions.

Traffic was congested. The *Tacony* and the *Agnes* came up. The *Gallatin* and the *G. A. Thompson* came down. July 3, the *Tacony* passed the *Abeona*, and the *Amaranth* came downriver. The *Abeona* stopped at a coal yard and took on 150 bushels of coal.

"We are sixty miles from Benton," wrote Mrs. Sanders, adding, "Heard that Gen'l. T. F. Meagher was drowned at Benton day before yesterday." About this drowning she did not comment, "Poor fellow."

Harriet's husband was an active politician of Republican convictions. Four times he was a candidate for territorial delegate in Congress; he was a member of the territorial legislature from 1872 to 1880; he was one of the brand-new state's first two U. S. Senators in 1890.

Thomas Francis Meagher was a high-ranking soldier of fortune, a Democrat, usually embroiled in controversy. He

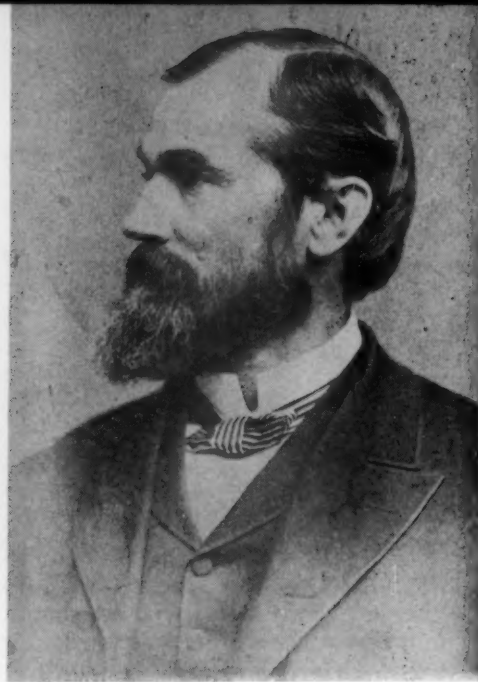
became territorial secretary of Montana in 1865 and was acting governor when Sidney Edgerton was out of the state, which was most of the time. In 1867, the year of Harriet Sanders' long boat ride, Congress canceled all the acts of the second and third legislative sessions of Montana Territory, and Meagher was disgraced. He did indeed drown at Fort Benton, and to this day nobody knows for sure whether he fell or was pushed.

Years later, Wilbur Fisk Sanders tried to clear the record of this scandal. He said that General Meagher went crazy. The two men were together all that last afternoon of Meagher's life. Meagher refused to take a single drink, Sanders pointed out—for there were those who said he had fallen into the river while drunk. But Meagher was strangely suspicious of people that day, repeating that the citizens of Fort Benton were out to get him. After he was put to bed in his stateroom on the steamer (cold sober, according to Sanders), he was heard calling for a pistol. Nobody ever admitted seeing him again, nor was his body ever found.

Sanders has a Montana county named for him; so has Meagher. Both men have been immortalized in bronze at the state capitol in Helena. An equestrian statue of General Meagher, the dashing soldier of fortune, is in front of the building. Inside the capitol is the bronze figure of Colonel Sanders, the



THOMAS FRANCIS MEAGHER, the strange Irish adventurer who became Montana's acting governor when Sidney Edgerton was out of the state, was drowned at Fort Benton in July, 1867. Col. Sanders (right) tried to clear up the mystery of Meagher's death. Statues of both these men are at Montana's capital, and both have had Montana counties named for them.



WILBUR FISK SANDERS, Vigilante, lawyer, legislator, businessman, and politician, was photographed in New York, after he had achieved national prominence. One of the stalwarts among Montana pioneers, some intimate details of his family life are revealed in the diary kept by his wife and the youthful journals of his son, James U. Sanders. (Historical Society photos.)

hero of Vigilante days, with the inscription, "Men, do your duty." (Good advice indeed for the legislators who convene there every second year.)

Sanders had been the Vigilantes' voluntary prosecuting attorney. "Men, do your duty," was his command to the executioners of George Ives, the first road agent the Vigilantes hanged. The men did their duty, and George Ives dangled in the moonlight at Nevada City, M. T.

Now back to Mrs. Sanders in the relatively peaceful year of 1867, not quite four years after that hanging:

July 4—ah, happy day!—the *Abeona* passed the mouth of the Marias River at one P. M. and made the other 27 miles to Benton by eleven that night. Here, in the journal as copied by Mrs. Sanders' son James nine years later, he has inserted: "Everybody drunk and celebrating in the full sense of the word. Papa delivered the oration during the day."

But Mrs. Sanders ignored the revelry. The family wasted no time in riotous Fort Benton. At 11 P. M. they landed; at 2 A. M. they were off and away by coach for Helena. The *Abeona* had been seventy-two days coming from St. Joe, eighty days from St. Louis.

All day July 5 they rode in the coach, which was crowded, "and we are all tired," wrote Mrs. Sanders in Spartan understatement. All night they rode, too, reaching Helena at eight in the morning. They stopped at Mrs. Rumley's; "she is a fine woman and made it very pleasant for us all." Right away they had callers: two judges, a minister, their wives and some other people. The Sanders family was important, and important people called on them—never mind if what they really needed was a good rest. Furthermore, that night they were serenaded—a pleasant custom, unless one wants to go to bed early.

Next day was Sunday, so they all went to church. Then Col. and Mrs.



SANDERS HOME in Virginia City, to which Mrs. Sanders was so anxious to return after her tedious journey from the "States" in 1867, is pictured here in 1899 when it was occupied by the family of A. W. Hall. Below is pictured Virginia City's main street at the height of its activity.
(Historical Society of Montana photos.)

Sanders went calling. No good long sleep that night, either. At 2 A. M. they started for home, Virginia City, 120 miles away, arriving at 11 P. M. after 21 hours on wheels.

"Stopped at Dr. Gibson's, all well and glad to see us. End of our trip. 'Home again, from a Foreign State'."

Sunday, July 14, Mrs. Sanders made a final entry in her journal: "Slept in our new house last night for the first time. It is on Idaho Street."

So after all that travel, when she finally did get home to Virginia City, the poor woman had to go through the misery of a moving job.





COLORADO

CATASTROPHE

by Samuel C. Blessing

Born in Los Angeles in 1922, Sam Blessing is a veteran of World War II, serving in the Air Force. His interest in John C. Fremont was first aroused when he prepared a paper on the Bear Flag Revolt while a student at Los Angeles City College. Mr. Blessing and his family live in Denver, where he is employed as a radio announcer. An avid student of history, he has written many articles on the myriad aspects of Fremont's career and is currently preparing a book-length treatment of The Pathfinder.

Other men speak of other tragedies, but one of the West's most heartbreaking was the 1848 winter which defeated John C. Fremont's 38th Parallel Pass Expedition.

IN THE cold silence of a mountain winter, thirty-five men set out to battle nature. They were experienced, strong and resolute men, and they battled bravely as the enemy deployed its strongest weapons: snow and wind. Though weakened by the onslaught, the men pushed on. Another, larger volley of snow was hurled at the invaders and the wind swooped down with renewed fury. Temperatures never rose above zero. The chilled men huddled about fires that melted holes, like well pits, in the snow. Then they stumbled through drifts higher than their heads while the snow and wind continued to pound them mercilessly. At last, the men fell in shameless defeat. And the wind, recognizing no truce in the battle, persisted in its onslaught of suffering and misery upon its haggard, beaten victims. These were the men of John Charles Fremont's disastrous Colorado expedition in the terrible winter of 1848.

"I was with Fremont from 1842 to 1847," Kit Carson once said of his old friend. "I find it impossible to describe the hardships through which we passed, nor am I capable of doing justice to

the credit which he deserves." Carson spoke with authority, having guided and accompanied John C. Fremont through much of the rugged west. The two shared much adventure, but the famous



JOHN CHARLES FREMONT, The Pathfinder, was a popular and heroic figure when he began his tragic 1848 expedition, goaded on by a wish to avenge the injustice of his court-martial. The fruitless expedition cost 10 lives and \$10,000 in equipment. This picture, from the Bancroft Library, University of California, was taken in 1856 when Fremont was a Presidential candidate, the first man nominated by the new Republican Party.

scout was not along when the hardened explorer met his greatest test, and Colonel Fremont pushed into the Rocky Mountains during one of the severest winter seasons yet recorded.

As an ambitious youth, Fremont became excited about surveying and discovery of our young country's uncharted lands. By 1846, he had led a company of topography corps men to the distant Pacific for the U. S. Army, with the rank of captain. As such, he was the only U. S. military officer on hand when California's Bear Flag Revolt erupted. The American settlers turned to him for leadership in their uprising.

Attesting to his command, Ned Kern, a survey artist and valuable aide in Fremont's company, wrote a brother in Philadelphia: "Had the revolutionists been left to themselves, a few weeks would have settled the business by their defeating themselves. A few honest and well disposed persons among them who really intended the movement for the best, but the majority moved by nothing but the chance of plunder without the slightest principles of honor to guide them, they would have defeated the cause . . ."

Instead of honor for his service, when the rebellion ended, the Captain was trapped in a squeeze for power between the Navy's Commodore Stockton, and Brigadier General Stephen Kearny of the Army. Court-martialed for his unwise choice of the two, he resigned his commission (having been elevated to a Colonelcy by then) because of the blistering, unjust sentence of the court.

John Fremont's name had already assumed heroic dimensions for the twenty million people of the growing nation, who were fired with the spirit of western expansion. To them, he was "The Pathfinder." Now, this courageous, but quiet, thoughtful and shy little man could only dwell upon the miscarriage of justice that had driven him, in disgrace, from the service of his country. To alleviate his new moroseness, his father-in-law, Missouri's powerful Senator Thomas H. Benton, a foremost advocate of America's western movement, urged Fremont to undertake a new expedition into the frontier.

Slavery was working an ever-growing wedge between the North and South. Eastern interests wanted a railroad from Missouri to Oregon and California, but the proposed route was proving a political stalemate. Southern representatives staunchly opposed the Union pursuing a northern course; if hostilities should develop, the railroad would be a determining power as line of supply and transportation of troops. For this same reason, the North objected to a southern route.

Lawmakers wrangled and feuded over the issue, but little else was accomplished. Benton suggested his son-in-law search for a central pass through the Rockies, near the 38th Parallel. This, many agreed, would meet with general acceptance from both sides.



GENERAL STEPHEN W. KEARNY, assigned by the Army to lead the conquest of California during the Mexican War, brought about the humiliating court-martial of John C. Fremont when the latter chose to obey the conflicting commands of Navy Commodore Robert Stockton. Although President Polk rescinded the conviction, Fremont bitterly smarted at the original verdict under which he was found guilty of mutiny and disobedience and dismissed from the service. His wife refused to forgive the repentant Kearny when he pleaded with her on his deathbed in 1848.

(Bancroft Library photo.)

Fremont envisioned the glory he would receive, to repair his wounded pride, by successfully crossing the Continental Divide in the midst of winter (for this would also determine the much-questioned feasibility of the route for year-round travel).

Fremont had heard reports, on passing with his earlier expeditions through the Rocky Mountains, of a good, all-season pass near the headwaters of the Rio Grande River. By mid-October, 1848, an awesome assembly of mountain men, mule packers, surveyors, guides and a few inexperienced but willing men with adventurous hearts, were gathered on Boon Creek, near Westport (present site of Kansas City), Missouri.

Braving the inconveniences of crude travel accommodations and the uninhabited country, Fremont's wife, Jessie, came this far with her husband. As he proceeded from this point on his mission over the mountains, she would sail around the Horn with their possessions. Their planned reunion the following March in California, they hoped, would mark the beginning of a new life. (The Colonel had earlier purchased a large tract of California land, named "The Mariposas," before his humiliating return for court-martial.)

Jessie Benton Fremont was no dainty parlor lady, such as most of her acquaintances. She labored proudly to contribute to her husband's career. Copying and editing the voluminous books of notes he recorded on his explorations, cataloging the various materials he collected, and methodically attending to his personal books of observations and descriptions about the wilderness areas he crossed and explored, her presence in Westport was proof of her strong character and determination.

While the party had been sailing upstream by riverboat from St. Louis, where the main outfitting of the expedition was completed and the men signed on, the Fremont's infant son, less than three months old, died. Harboring a deep bitterness toward society, for its branding him a traitor, The Pathfinder took this blow painfully. He held Kearny, who had brought the court-martial charges against him, responsible for his wife's ill health, after she learned of her husband's tribulations. Had it not been for Jessie's stout insistence, he might have disbanded this company and forgotten the fateful overland trip.

Thus a sad Fremont bid his wife farewell, as he led his expedition into Kansas on October 19, 1848. During the last eleven days, the men had groomed their animals carefully and anxiously made every possible preparation for the long, arduous journey ahead. The party pushed only five miles and camped that night in open country. At least they were underway and in the wilderness. Like a knight out of Sir Walter Scott, Fremont mounted that

SENATOR THOMAS H. BENTON of Missouri, father-in-law of John C. Fremont and a powerful exponent of westward expansion and Manifest Destiny, is shown in this picture from the Bancroft Library, University of California. Although the Benton family at first opposed Fremont's marriage to their daughter, the influential Senator became the explorer's chief mentor.

evening and romantically rode back to Westport to say adieu to his wife, once more.

Ten days later, as Jessie packed at the stately Benton family home in St. Louis, a note was brought her from General Kearny. From his deathbed, he begged her to visit him, to forgive him for the misfortune he had brought upon her husband. Without hesitation, she refused both requests.

The first twenty-six days out of Westport, Fremont's train swept easily across the long, flat prairies, steadily gaining altitude as it approached the Rockies. Rising early each dawn, the men choked down breakfast, packed their reluctant mules, and rode out of camp in the pink tint of sunrise. They jogged at a brisk pace, covering as much as twenty to twenty-five miles a day. Every man was on constant guard for signs of hostile Indians, bad weather or wild animals. At dusk, they climbed wearily from their mounts, fed and hobbled them. After their second and final meal of the day, the remaining hour or two might be spent singing Stephen Foster's newest song, or trading stories of past frontier experiences about the roaring chatter of the homey campfires.

Arriving at Bent's Fort on November 15th, they found temperatures registering only twelve degrees above zero. After resting from their crossing of the plains, the men prepared for the chilling drive ahead. "Both Indians and whites here report the snow to be deeper in the mountains than has for a long time been known so early in the season," Fremont wrote his father-in-law, "and they predict a severe winter. Still, I am in nowise discouraged by the prospect, and believe that we shall succeed in forcing our way across." The Pathfinder had often



heard fearful warnings during his previous trips through this country, and had learned to give them no serious thought.

Many seasoned trappers and mountain men at Bent's Fort considered Fremont's latest undertaking downright risky, yet he carefully examined his rugged collection of men, some of whom had served with him in California during 1846, and felt secure. There were those trusted ones who had been along for the last two explorations—sound and reliable woodsmen. As he evaluated it all, in Pueblo, a few days later: "A vigorous effort, I trust, will carry us over."

Fremont based his confidence in the calibre of men he directed. He had come to know many of them intimately. Raphael Proue, the German map maker who would become the party's first fatality, for example, had accompanied the Colonel on all his expeditions; Alexis Godey, that courageous and handsome guide whom Fremont ranked "... in courage and professional skill a formidable rival to Carson"; and Edward M. (Ned) Kern so taken by the character of Colonel Fremont and so intent on joining the company, that he had volunteered to serve without pay—but moreover had also enlisted his two brothers, a doctor and another artist like himself, to do the same!



JESSIE BENTON FREMONT, daughter of Missouri's powerful Senator Thomas H. Benton, married John C. Fremont in 1841 after a romance of two years. She was 17 and he was 28. Jessie's parents had objected to the match, but Senator Benton accepted their announcement of marriage following an elopement and began using his influence on behalf of his son-in-law's career. Jessie Fremont proved to be a stout young lady and sent her husband off on his 1848 mission even though she had just lost her 3-months-old son.

(Denver Public Library photo.)



EDWARD M. (Ned) KERN, young Philadelphia artist and naturalist, had been a member of Fremont's 1846 expedition, and was so taken with The Pathfinder that he served in the ill-fated 1848 trip as topographer without pay and even enlisted his two brothers, one a physician and the other an artist like himself. The Kern party was rescued from the 1848 ordeal and lived to give first-hand accounts. (Bancroft Library photo.)

Even two of the group's 'greenhorns' were well known to Fremont, being from his own household staff. One of these hoped to earn enough money in California to buy the freedom of his bonded family (about \$1,700, in those days). Like their leader, the average man of the party was in his prime, in his mid-thirties, adventurous in spirit but hardened to life's punishments. They wisely realized the rigors of exploration they were likely to endure.

Moving on to Pueblo, Fremont encountered picturesque "Old Bill" Williams¹, the stalwart who had guided the Third Fremont Expedition through the Rockies. This storied hunter and trapper, who once rode about Missouri as a missionary, enjoyed the reputation of being one the best qualified of all the known mountain men.

Although the Colonel finally persuaded Old Bill to lead this mission, "... It was not without some hesitation that he consented to go," notes Micajah McGehee in the diary he kept of the daily proceedings, "for most of the old trappers at the pueblo declared that it was impossible to cross the mountains at that time; that the cold upon the mountains was unprecedented, and the snow deeper than they had ever known it so early in the year. However, Old Bill concluded to go for he thought we could manage to get through, though not without considerable suffering."

Williams, either knowingly or otherwise, failed to inform The Pathfinder of his recent falling out with the Utes, of which tribe his wife was a member. The veteran mountain man's acceptance by the Indians had been one of Fremont's arguments in favor of his directing the

¹ It would be natural for Fremont to meet Williams here, as Pueblo was recognized as wintering headquarters for many trappers of the area. Stanley Vestal claims Williams had broken his arm that summer, and was nursing it back together when Fremont came upon him. Zebulon Pike is believed to have established some sort of structure on this site, the present location of the city of Pueblo, Colo. Pike was there in 1806. A fur trader is known to have built a cabin at this place during the winter of 1821-22. The famous trapper, Jim Beckwourth, stated he arrived there in October, 1842, with "... from fifteen to twenty trappers with their families. We all united our labours and constructed an adobe fort sixty yards square ... we gave it the name of Pueblo." Later, the place fell into disrepair and, for a time, was very nearly deserted, except for a handful of retired trappers living in the vicinity.

group. In addition to his knowledge of the region, Williams' friendship with the Utes was expected to guarantee their safe passage. Had it not been for the unusual cold of this winter, the company might have fallen into the hands of angry Ute warriors, all the more now that Bill was with them.

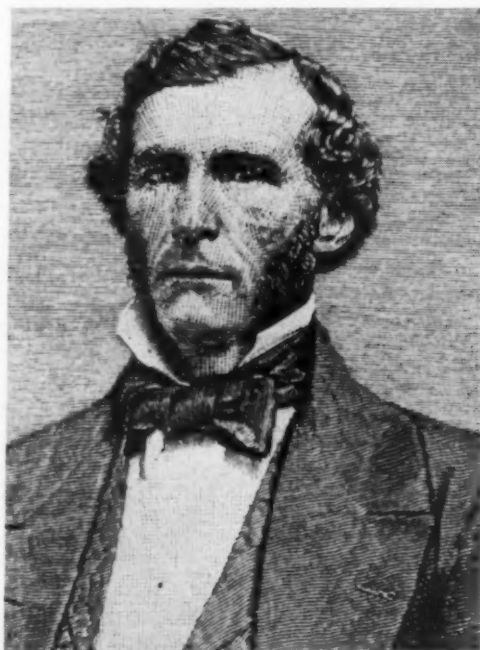
The truth was that Williams, following a successful trapping foray and a good sale of pelts, had celebrated with a spectacular drinking spree. It ended by his agreeing to lead an army band against one tribe of Utes. Thus Williams, in reality, was hiding from the terrible wrath of the Utes when Fremont met him in Pueblo. He undoubtedly hoped that guiding the expedition would help him escape to California.

For comparison, the varied observations of the two men who held the fate of this undertaking in their hands, are interesting. David Brown, who first met Williams in 1837, had said: "He could . . . swear harder and longer, and coin more queer and awful oaths than any pirate that ever blasphemed under a black flag . . ." On the other hand, "Col. Fremont never forgot he was a gentleman; not an oath . . . When, heaven knows, he had enough to excite [him]," wrote Solomon Carvalho, who served as daguerreotypist with Fremont's Fifth Expedition in 1853. An Englishman once complained of Old Bill's habit of continuous spitting. To this, the veteran trapper is reputed to have stated that in America there were only two sexes—those that spit and those that didn't; and as for him he would go on spitting until hell froze over, and then spit a couple of days on the ice.

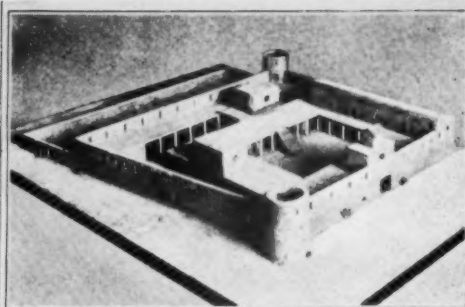
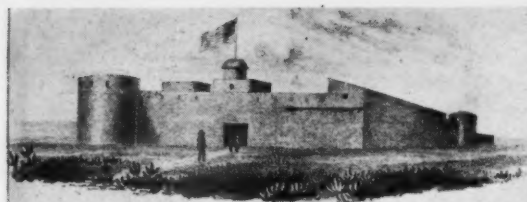
Upon leaving Pueblo, there remained but one stop before the expedition climbed into the high country. Nestled at the foot of Wetback Mountains, this was the small settlement of ex-mountain men called Hardscrabble. Doctor Ben Kern described it as: "a miserable place containing about a dozen houses, corn cribs and corals." Here



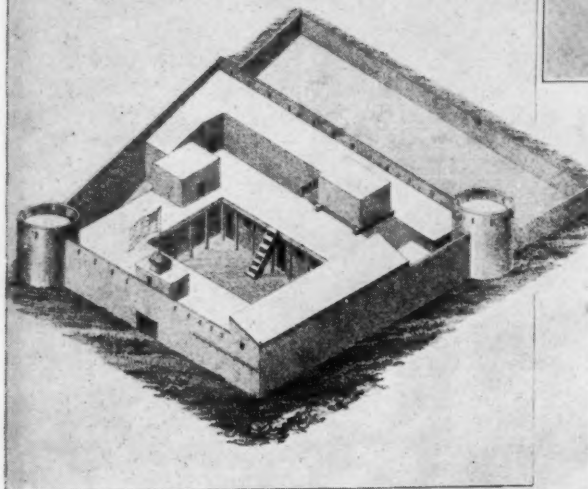
"OLD BILL" WILLIAMS, colorful guide, hunter and trapper whom Fremont met at Pueblo and engaged as pilot for his Fourth Expedition, is portrayed here by the late Lea F. McCarty. The old mountain man lost his bearings during the expedition and was barely alive when his horse brought him to camp. Williams was in the party sent by the desperate Fremont to get help for his freezing and starving men. He was mysteriously killed by Ute Indians the next spring, and his body was never found.



ALEXIS GODEY, skilled mountain man, was Fremont's official guide on his fateful mountain crossing attempt in 1843. A trusted guide who had been with The Pathfinder on earlier explorations, Godey sided with Old Bill Williams when Fremont tried to dissuade them from taking a difficult route. Sent for help, Godey rescued some of the stricken men of Fremont's party but others were dead and frozen before he reached them. (Denver Public Library photo.)



A REPLICCA OF BENT'S FORT



BENT'S FORT, located on the north bank of the Arkansas River, six miles east of present La Junta, Colo., was an early landmark in the Rocky Mountains. It was to this place that Fremont's expedition arrived November 15, 1848 to find the temperature already 12 degrees above zero. Many seasoned trappers and mountain men at the fort considered the expedition unwise, but The Pathfinder pushed on in his tragic effort to find a feasible crossing of the Continental Divide at the 38th Parallel. Bent's Fort was established in 1834 by Charles Bent and Ceran St. Vrain as an Indian trading post. General Stephen Kearny had appointed Bent governor of New Mexico in 1846, but during the Taos uprising January 19, 1847, Bent was brutally killed by a mob. Hardly an adventurer to the West failed to stop at this famous site. The two drawings at the left, top and bottom, are taken from J. J. Albert's "Report of an Expedition on the Upper Arkansas, 1845." The replica of Bent's Fort, above, is reproduced by courtesy of the State Historical Society of Colorado.

(Denver Public Library photo.)

the mules (100 to 120, according to differing historians) were laden with enough shelled corn to sustain them through twenty-five grueling days in deep snow, without the aid of other food along the trail. Fremont was cautiously supplying his company for the worst conditions they could possibly meet.

The train set out from Hardscrabble on Saturday, November 25, 1848. It was "like April," one man wrote in his diary; but six hard days of plunging through high drifts and floundering under an early sampling of winter's fury, brought them to an exhausted halt at the foot of their second range, the bold Sangre De Cristo's. One member pictured the men, during this brief rest, as "all very tired."

Groping their way through what is today Mosca Pass, the party finally emerged on the edge of the Great Sand Dunes in Colorado's San Luis Valley. There they found that winter had not only assembled but had rushed her advance troops to oppose them. The weary men, already buffeted by freezing weather, found the mercury so low one night that it completely sank into

the balls of the thermometers; and no one knew the fullest degree of bitter cold. Coming through the Pass, too, cakes of snow had balled-up in the mules' hooves at least six inches thick. Then fresh snow began falling and the winds rose. By the next day, the small band found itself being torn by a howling blizzard.

The Colonel wearily reviewed his fatigued troops. Satisfied by their morale and physical readiness, he ordered them back to the battle lines.

From their bivouac, had the gauze of swirling snow blowing through the air been lifted, the men could have seen, across the wide valley and due west, the towering magnificence of the San Juan Mountains. Three passes are carved into this giant range, in this area. Most northerly is Cochetopa Pass. An unpaved road now winds from the San Luis, through it to the fertile Gunnison Valley, kept open even today only in good weather. To the south, and more difficult to reach, is Carnero Pass. Most hazardous of the three, but nearest the desired 38th Parallel, is Williams, or Rio Del Norte Pass.

Which of the three would The Pathfinder seek? Eight years later, a New York newspaper encouraged Alexis Godey to write his views on the expedition. Since historians differ so widely as to whom to blame for the fate of the party and which pass was their true goal, Godey's statement has great significance:

Col. Fremont was, from the time we first came in sight of the Carnero Pass, on the 8th of December . . . strongly averse to taking it in our course, preferring to turn off and go through the Cochetopy, a pass some thirty miles to the right; and scarcely a night passed without a consultation took place between the Colonel, myself, Williams, and others; but Williams, who had, as he said, frequently traveled it, evinced so much confidence, and was so strenuous in his efforts to carry his point, that I was completely in his favor . . . in this way we travelled on, Fremont unconvinced, yet without any reason to urge, until the 12th instant, when Williams and myself, being ahead, were overtaken by Fremont, who rode up and halted us . . . The Colonel then again expressed his fears of trouble ahead, and then it was that Williams told him, that "if he doubted his capacity to carry the party through, say so, and he could get another pilot"; he asserted in the most positive terms that "he knew every inch of the country better than the Colonel knew his own garden." Having every confidence myself in Williams, I advised the Colonel to let him go . . . Fremont acceded to our united arguments . . . with what result is well known.

But Godey was a friend of Fremont's, and his letter was written in 1856, the year Fremont campaigned for the presidency. It cannot be blindly accepted. The records of others in the expedition claim the Colonel stubbornly urged the company toward the steep, almost inaccessible Del Norte Pass, contrary to Williams' advice; and no one could reason with him about this choice. Although this would have been the shortest route for a railroad, the canyon probably never could have been feasibly engineered.

At any rate, bending their numb bodies into the raging blizzard, the men began this tortured crossing of the valley toward Del Norte, "... with the determination of getting through it as quickly as possible. We travelled late and camped in the middle of it," McGehee entered in his diary that night, "without any shelter from the winds, and with no fuel but some wild sage, a small shrub which grew sparsely around. The cold was intense, the thermometer to-night standing at 17 degrees below zero . . ."

When the party reached the Rio Grande's frigid banks the next day, Fremont directed the men northward, along the course of the river. At a point known today as South Fork, Williams suddenly turned up the canyon of Embargo Creek, heading the party toward its fateful ascent. Fremont halted the company, and a bitter disagreement ensued, but as Godey says, "Fremont acceded . . ." It should be said that Williams had grown increasingly apprehensive about the chances for their success. Repeatedly, he urged the Colonel to swerve to the south, following the Rio Grande into New Mexico, then attack the Continental Divide from a less severe point. But this would have defeated the purpose of Fremont's entire exploration. "Having still great confidence in this man's knowledge," The Pathfinder recalled, "we pressed onwards with fatal resolution . . ." Inching their way up the boulder-filled canyon, the men encountered snow drifts higher than their heads. As they beat a path for the mules to follow, breath froze into icicles and clung to the men's unkept beards; blood ran from their noses. Williams' error in judgment was felt by Ned Kern. Writing to a friend from Taos afterward, he stated: "... he was evidently mistaken, for a worse road I never saw."

Plodding slowly on, the party moved toward the summit with remarkable determination, the winds and snow continually battering them, their fingers and toes nipped with frostbite. Yet

they finally conquered the terrible ridge at almost 12,300 feet elevation. Jubilantly, because the party believed they had gained the Divide, they soon started their descent of the western slope. Actually many miles remained between them and the nearest pass, the Carnero.

A new blizzard burst forth with a maddened, renewed fury, as if to spend itself in one final, gigantic drive to repel the invaders. It succeeded. Fremont searched the faces of his despondent, tiring men; faces glazed blue with cold. He ordered them back to the previous night's camp. Retreating over the ridge, they re-kindled fires in the deep shelter holes melted into the drifts the night before. Old Bill did not return with the party. Stubbornly, anchored to the saddle of his mule, he wandered through the blinding whiteness looking for a sign of some familiar landmark. At dusk when the animal did return to camp the men removed a near-frozen Bill Williams. Old Bill, whom the Indians called "Lone Elk," confided to those within sound of his weak voice that he had not been able to get his bearings and had lost his way through the valleys he knew so well.

It had now been twenty-one agonizing days since the party left Hardscrabble. Now, each day became more of a task than the one before, while winter's anger continually mounted. Fremont's men would push valiantly into the relentless blizzard only to fall back in hopelessness after an hour or two. The mules were now dying of starvation and fatigue. Their frozen carcasses were butchered to supplement dwindling rations. "We were continually looking for something better," says the account of T. E. Breckenridge, "and conditions were growing daily worse."

To keep from freezing the men huddled in small, shivering groups around fires that cast grotesque shadows on the snowy walls. The drifts about them measured up to forty feet deep. Listening to the tormented whistling of the wind, they could now hear above it the

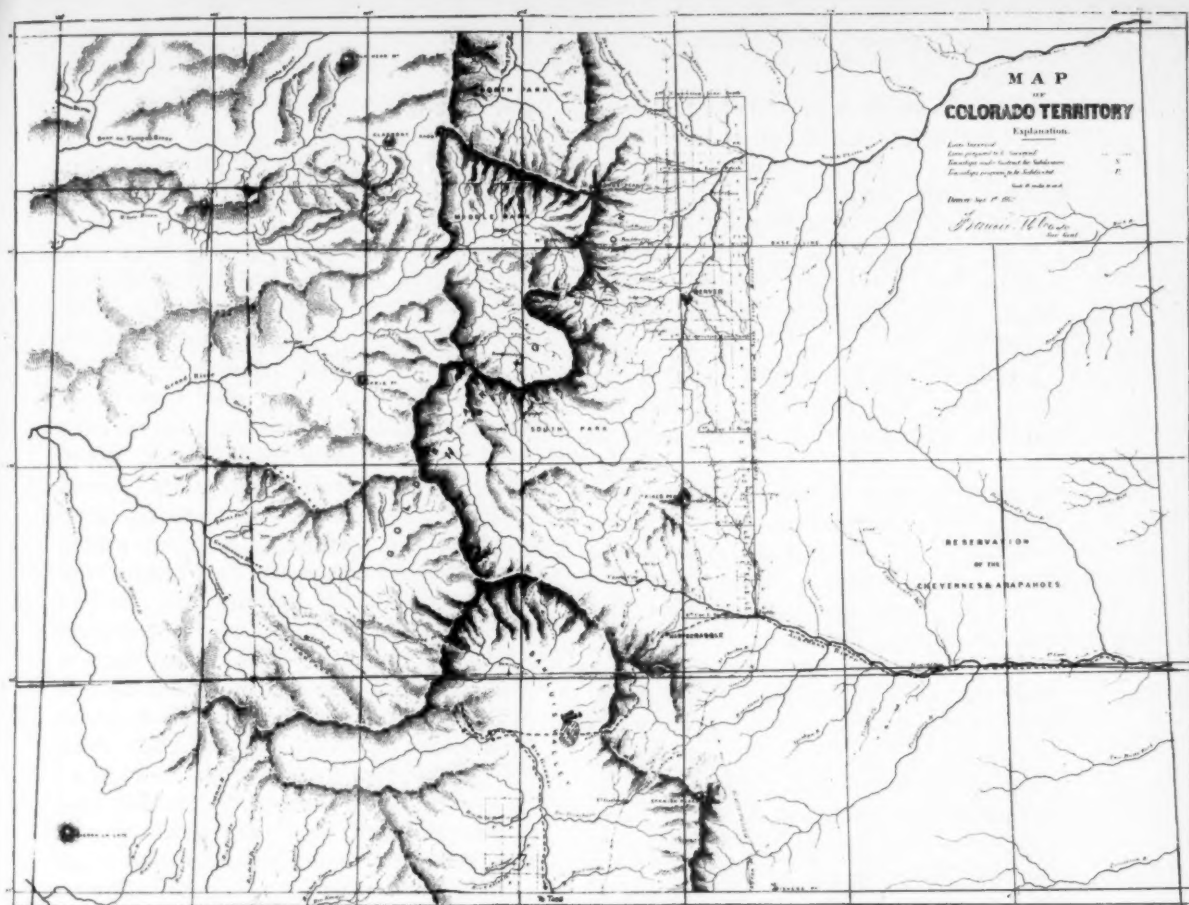
mournful braying of starving mules. Day after day they fought their battle with the blizzard upon that icy, treacherous ridge.

On the twenty-sixth day, Fremont slumped down beside his meager fire. The pain-wracked faces and pitiful eyes of his men now were haunting him. Tears of anger and frustration glistened in his eyes. He wrung his hands, searching desperately for one last sign of hope. There appeared to be none. Heartsick, he confessed defeat. In the morning, Fremont sadly told the company they would start moving back. "Along these naked heights it storms all winter," Fremont wrote later, "and the raging winds sweep across them with remorseless fury."

Now the retreat toward the Rio Grande was underway. Christmas day dawned upon this desolate, jaded collection of beaten men. Their yuletide menu was "elk stew and pies, rice doughnuts; coffee biscuit & hot stuff," according to Doctor Kern's diary. The following day the Colonel dispatched Old Bill and three others to Taos, New Mexico, 160 miles to the south. They were to seek relief. The remainder of the expedition would try to work down to the frozen river. Only nine mules were alive now, and these poor starving animals chewed constantly at their harnesses, ropes and blankets; even at the hair of each other's tail and mane to fill their empty stomachs.

The distance between themselves and salvation slowly narrowed. Time was running out for the anticipated return of Old Bill with prayed for relief. On January 9, they found the frozen body of Raphael Proue, the German map maker. Micajah McGehee wrote in his diary, "we passed and repassed his lifeless body, not daring to stop long enough in the intense cold to perform the useless rite of burial." "It is an utter impossibility," says another, "to describe the agony of those days."

When relief did not arrive, The Pathfinder chose four men to accompany him and, after directing the main party



The route of John C. Fremont's Fourth Expedition has been inked in with broken lines on this 1862 map supplied by the Denver Public Library. Also added is the location of Hardscrabble, a settlement of mountain men which was the last supply point of the Expedition as it approached the snowy Rockies. The entire map is reproduced here to help orient the reader, although some locations such as Canon City and Fort Garland were unknown when the Fremont trek was made 14 years before.

to continue moving the equipment downstream, they set off for the Red River settlements. "We carried . . . arms and provisions for two days," Fremont states. "In the camp the messes had provisions for two or three meals, more or less . . ."

Moving quickly southward, Fremont encountered a friendly Ute on the fifth day out. The Indian agreed to guide them, and loaned them horses. The following day smoke was seen rising from a clump of trees. As they cautiously approached they beheld three of ". . . the most miserable objects I have ever seen," dragging themselves toward Fremont's group. Yellow skin clung to the skeleton figures of these survivors from the first relief. One had already

died of starvation. Fremont later expressed the belief that ". . . the other three utilized him to sustain life." While charges of cannibalism have since been debated, the Colonel in his memoirs quotes Kit Carson as saying, "In starving times no man who knew him ever walked in front of Bill Williams."

"By the aid of horses," wrote Fremont, "we carried these three with us to the Red River settlement . . ." However, one of the survivors in a magazine interview almost fifty years later avowed that the Colonel stayed only ". . . long enough to cook some venison, then pushed on, ordering us to follow as fast as we could . . . for nearly the entire distance we crawled on ice or through the snow."

Be that as it may, the eight with their Indian guide finally were welcomed by settlers near what today is Questa, New Mexico, on January 21. By the next evening, Alexis Godey led a train with supplies back up the Rio Grande for those left behind. Little did he dream the hardships they were enduring.

Beside the lifeless banks of that ice-filled river, the remainder of the expedition struggled desperately to haul down the baggage, sometimes averaging as little as a single mile in a day. They suffered deprivation beyond man's understanding. Their food supply was gone. They boiled a soup from the leather of their moccasins, jackets and rawhide ropes. They dug in the hard ground for roots and hungrily devoured small flower buds. On one occasion they feasted on the frozen remains of a half-eaten wolf, inexplicably left by other animals.

Starving and desperate, the men crouched about their fires throughout one frightening night, watching in horror as one man raved in madness. He wandered away when morning came and was never seen again. The disheartened men began quarreling and the company divided into two bands, the stronger abandoning the weaker members to their own devices. "... A piece of rascality almost without parallel," one of the deserted wrote.

From this time on all accounts available vary so greatly that no clear picture emerges except that the suffering continually increased. Those who could no longer bear it simply laid down in the snow and died, or stumbled off into the endless white wastes.

Life ebbed away from Elijah Andrews the day Godey set out with relief. The body lay upon the packed snow between the two fires the eight remaining men shared. To those around McGehee's fire came a man from the other. Without disclosing who, in his diary he credits him with saying: "Men, I have come to make a proposition. I don't know how you will take it. It is

a horrid one. We are starving; in two or three days more, unless something be done, we shall all be dead. As soon as we leave this body it will become the prey of wild beasts. Now I propose instead that we make use of it to save life." McGehee adds, "All sat in silence; then several of us objected." Cannibalism was never proven against members of Fremont's Fourth Expedition.

After Godey had traveled three days he came upon the first of the survivors. Feeding them dry bread and warm soup, and leaving them with warm clothes, he pushed on, meeting four more of the company the next morning. Fremont records the reunion in this manner: "In the morning Haler's party continued on. After a few hours, Hibbard gave out. They built him a fire, gathered him some wood, and left him without, as Haler says, turning their heads to look at him as they went off. About two miles further Scott . . . gave out. They did the same for him as for Hibbard, and continued on. In the afternoon the Indian boys went ahead, and before nightfall met Godey with the relief. Haler heard and knew the guns which he fired for him at night, and starting early in the morning, soon met him. I hear that they all cried together like children. Haler turned back with Godey, and went with him to where they had left Scott. He was still alive, and was saved. Hibbard was dead—still warm." Last to be rescued was the Kern party. "I had closed all my affairs and felt that a day or two more would end my troubles," Ed Kern wrote from Taos, "when, about noon on the 28th, we heard a shout, and Godey entered camp. Here ended our troubles." It had been thirty-three days since Fremont dispatched Old Bill Williams for aid.²

² After Fremont continued on to California from Taos, Cart, Stepperfeldt, Bill Williams and the three Kerns elected to remain there, or return to the 'States'. Williams and Doctor Ben Kern, in company with Mexicans hired for the task, returned over the trail of the Fourth Expedition to attempt to recover some of the valuable lost equipment and supplies. Williams and Dr. Kern were, reportedly, killed on March 14, 1849 by a band of Ute Indians after recovering the lost property, or by the Mexicans in their employ. The bodies were never found. Many other legends abound concerning the death of Old Bill Williams, but this appears the most reliable.

The trail back was still laborious. The final members did not arrive in Taos until February 12th. Seventy-eight days had elapsed since these men started out of Hardscrabble. "Thus has ended the expedition — which commenced," notes Ed Kern, "so far as outfit was concerned, under as flattering prospects as ever one started. The loss in dollars has amounted to over \$10,000—in life 10."

There were other losses, too. Fremont, through this second failure, believed he had completely lost the respect of the American public and many of his men reluctantly lost their child-like faith in his dauntless leadership. William Brandon in *The Men and The Mountain* calls this: "... Fremont's peculiarly romantic hold on the imaginations of men who followed him. He was moody, erratic, obsessed, desperate to dare the devil, and the people of the expedition recognized all this (by observation and on the authority of Old Bill Williams) and answered it with a sustained effort of blind courage and what can only be called gallantry."

In a strange, odd turn of fate, Fremont moved on to California. He discovered gold on his new property and was a millionaire within a year of the failure of this 1848 expedition. In 1850 he was elected as one of California's first U. S. senators. Three years later he attacked the Cochetopa Pass, reeled briefly, but succeeded in crossing it without loss of life. Then Fremont had the distinction of being the first man to bear the banner of the new Republican Party for the office of President of the United States in 1856. Under Lincoln's tutoring, The Pathfinder scored a good vote, but it, like his Rocky Mountain crossing, fell short of victory. In 1890 he died of ptomaine poisoning in New York. Of the many spectacular episodes which crowded John C. Fremont's exciting life, nothing comes near the sheer magnitude of his campaign against man's great rival—a terrible Rocky Mountain winter!

[The End]

C. M. RUSSELL DRAWING ON NEW U. S. POSTAGE STAMP

Charles M. Russell's famed pen and ink drawing "The Trail Boss," will depict the old as contrasted with the new range and livestock picture on the 4-cent Range Conservation stamp, due for release in Salt Lake City next February 2. Long used as a semi-official emblem of the American Society of Range Management, the original of "The Trail Boss" is one of many Russells which cannot be located.

The stamp will be released in conjunction with the annual meeting of the range management group which will also be attended by the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management and the Indian



Service. It was designed by Rudolph Wendelin, a staff artist with the Agriculture Department. The Russell drawing, printed in black at the left side, depicts the Old West. On the other side of a tear line through the center of the stamp, a contemporary scene of a well-managed range in the same setting, is printed in yellow and blue.

Addressed envelopes for first-day cancellation may be sent to the Postmaster, Salt Lake City 1, Utah, with remittance for the cost of the stamps. The outer envelope should be marked "First Day Covers Range Conservation Stamp," and should be postmarked before midnight, January 28, 1961.

The Historical Society offers "The Trail Boss" as a print, excellent for framing at \$1; in an attractive stationery box of 12 notes and envelopes, \$1; or as a large packet of imprinted letterheads and envelopes at \$1.50.

Colonel Sanders to "Major" Brooke:

A Leading Republican Writes An Unreconstructed Democrat About A Political Appointment 70 Years Ago

POLITICAL foes of an earlier day were rarely as polite to each other as they are today, but friendships behind the scenes were frequently much warmer. In the files of the Historical Society of Montana Library we recently ran across a letter, dated July 12, 1890, written by U. S. Senator Wilbur Fisk Sanders to his personal friend but political enemy, "Major" Edward G. Brooke. The views it expresses are appropriate as well as historically interesting in the politically charged atmosphere of 1960 and 1961.

Edward Gant Brooke, born in Maryland in 1819, spent 42 years of his life in Montana, from 1865 when he arrived overland from St. Louis with his family, until his death in 1907 at Whitehall, the Montana town he named. He served for more than 20 years as postmaster at the Whitehall stage station on the Wells-Fargo line. Brooke and his wife, Rachel, took charge of the station in 1869, purchasing the one and one-half story white house and operating a hotel in connection with the station. They named it Whitehall, and later, by donating land to the Northern Pacific Railroad for right-of-way three miles away, Brooke saw to it that the town of Whitehall was also so named.

The verbal sparring matches between Brooke and Sanders began in the Montana Territorial legislative sessions of

1876 and 1879 when both were members of the house. Sanders, a nephew of Territorial Governor Sidney Edger-ton, was staunchly Republican and Unionist in his politics. Virginian Brooke, an admirer of Robert E. Lee and of the South, was an equally staunch Democrat.

By 1890, political passions in Montana, particularly as they related to the Civil War, had subsided, and Brooke and Sanders had become fast friends. But they were still poles apart in their political thinking. When Brooke retired as Whitehall postmaster in 1891, he believed his successor should be W. W. McCall. When he mistakenly believed that the appointment had gone to Oscar H. Davey, he apparently wrote to Colonel Sanders, by then in the U. S. Senate, with some heat. Sanders' reply appears below. Brooke had gotten his facts wrong—McCall was appointed in July, 1891 to succeed him and Davey got the job two years later.

UNITED STATES SENATE,
Washington, D. C.,
July 12th, 1890.

E. G. Brooke, Esq.
Helena, Montana.

Dear Sir:

I have received your "growl" of a recent date about the appointment of Mr. Davy as postmaster to succeed you instead of Mr. McCall whom you recommended. Evidently you are one of those people who

MONTANA the magazine of western history



"MAJOR" E. G. BROOKE, outspoken Democrat, legislator and postmaster, is pictured at Whitehall, the town he named, in this rare picture taken in 1900, seven years before his death at 88. Brooke came to Montana Territory in 1865, suffering with consumption. He was given the "honorary" rank of Major because of his experience as marshal of St. Louis, Mo. (Historical Society of Montana photo.)

believe all you hear and you have got that apology for being a democrat. I never could account for it before, and when I reflect that the democrats have lied the republican party out of your support for the last twenty-five years, I am real glad that somebody published a report that Mr. Davy was postmaster there, for it accounts for but does not justify your being a democrat. I know how much labor you have given to the postoffice at Whitehall the last quarter of a century, and how little it has paid in the way of money. When I reflect upon the thousand times that you have gotten up to take care of the mail with the thermometer below zero and the house perfectly cold, I should certainly think the country owed you thanks for such services if it were done as a matter of patriotism; but when you tell me that you held that office for twenty-five years and made all those sacrifices for the purpose of establishing your loyalty, I beg leave to assure you that it was much easier to have "taken your ease in your inn" and been actually loyal by voting the republican ticket. The "damned spot" of your democracy will not out, not even in the face of such splendid official service as you rendered at Whitehall. I invoke of you to come over on the Lord's side, and don't

believe all you read in those Missouri papers about the wickedness of the republican party. After twenty-six years feeding upon the husks which the swine of democracy alone could eat, come to the republican house where there is a clear conscience, and the consciousness of high service, and good company. You have voted no as to every good proposition long enough. In the republican party you will be required to exercise greater solicitude for good government and all other good things; but the consciousness that you are assisting in obtaining them, will pay you for the anxiety. You do not have very much worldly trouble in being a democrat in Montana. About once in two years whenever any good measure is submitted to those people, all you have to do is to get up and scream NO at the top of your voice. There is a verse of scripture, 2 Cor., 6 Chap. 17 verse, which contains the advice I would give you touching the Montana Democracy and all other partisan democracy in the United States. To the unphilosophical mind not trained in biblical lore, your case would seem to be a hopeless one; but a wiser view will justify the expectation that if you reform now and join the republican party, you will get the same pecuniary reward that you



OLD WHITEHALL STAGE STATION, three miles from the present town of that name, as it looked in 1868, when "Major" Brooke and his family operated the white house as a Wells Fargo station and hotel. Standing at the extreme left on the ground is the Wells Fargo agent, and leaning against the post is "Governor" Elijah M. Pollinger, early trader and former Vigilante who at the time the picture was taken was employed by Ben Holladay's stage company furnishing supplies and accommodations for passengers between Virginia City and Helena. "Major" Brooke is the man on the porch holding a newspaper. The telegraph operator is leaning against the pole and a driver may be seen standing by the stage coach. The two girls on the balcony are daughters of "Major" and Mrs. Brooke, Mrs. Lulu Lee Stanley, in white, and Mrs. Minnie N. King.

would have obtained, had you borne the heat and burden of the day. Read the parable of the laborers in the vineyard written for the benefit of those that come in late, being the first half of the 20th chap of St. Matthew. I am very sorry to learn that Mr. Davy whom I thought an honorable man, should advise anybody to register as a voter who was not entitled to vote. I can hardly believe after that statement, if he did it knowingly, that he is a republican. There must be some mistake

about it, probably the party registering imposed upon him. Were there not other persons in that vicinity registered who were not voters? I am seized with the painful apprehension that you may not find your twenty-five years of political affiliation all that an honest man can desire, and that you will yourself confess as you look in the mirror that your best enthusiasms have been misplaced. Think of an intelligent and moral citizen, feeling the grave responsibilities of citizenship, yelling over the prairies, paeans to the Montana democracy between hiccoughs. It is a great faculty to be able to keep in touch with the time and not allow the accident of birth or association to control one's views or affiliations, and I cannot see any reason why a person born in Virginia should waste all his subsequent years by being a democrat.

In weighing the relative merits of Mr. McCall and Mr. Davy, your own opinion will by no means be overlooked.

With my best regards to Mrs. Brooke in which my wife joins, I am,

Very truly your friend,
W. F. SANDERS

P. S. Davy has not been appointed.



MONTANA PIONEERS James Fergus, left, and "Major" E. G. Brooke are shown in this rare old picture from the Historical Society of Montana archives, originally published in "Contributions to the Historical Society," Volume 4. Fergus County and the town of Whitehall were named for these men.

Reaction From Our Readers

THE MAGIC OF JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ

"I am a German Indian friend and I am reading your marvelous MONTANA magazine since Autumn '59. I have just now renewed for the next two years for I believe it is the best magazine in true Western history.

"Reading Mr. H. C. James' article 'Apikuni's Ageless Audience' I was very much remembered of my own boyhood. Oh yes, we loved the Indian people because we admired that Red Gentleman Winnetou (James spells it 'Winetoo').

"Near the once beautiful city of Dresden there was that exciting Karl May Museum. An old Indian friend, Patty Frank, founded that Indian museum in 1926 together with the widow of the writer Karl May (1842-1912). The museum is built in Western style like an old-time log cabin. It remembers very much of the Buffalo Bill Museum near Cody.



"Many of those who once admired the Indian tales of Karl May developed a continued interest in the Indian and the Old West. So you can find Indian clubs in many cities here in Germany. These German Indian hobbyists study the real Indian life and make beautiful Indian buckskin costumes in the style of the old-time Plains Indian. Every year the Indian Hobbyists hold a large Indian Council. Let me enclose a photograph showing me (as mountain-man) and my family with friends during an Indian camp here in Berlin.

"Mr. James will be interested to know that there were two books of James Willard Schultz translated into German during the twentieth century. These books were published by the Ernte Verlag, Hamburg, Ger. One German title was *In Natakhis Zelt*, the other *Natakhi und ich*. . . ."

Wolfgang Seifert
Strasse 106 No. 37
Berlin-Buckow 1
Germany

"Congratulations are due you for the interesting and informative October issue, treating with James Willard Schultz. I note on page 23 that you list 37 titles as the 'complete production' of Schultz in book-length stories. As a devotee of this author, I have through my earlier years collected most of his works. Regrettably, several of his books are missing from my collection. However, I discover that I have a few additional titles which you do not list. In justice to Schultz, I think these titles should be added to your list. They are:

"*The Warring Tribes*, American Boy Magazine, Jan.-May, 1920; *The Wolfers*, American Boy, Dec.,

1922, and March, 1923; *The Peace Trail*, American Boy, Aug.-Oct., 1931; *The Raiders*, (two part story), American Boy, Aug.-Sept., 1932; *At the Sacred Rock* (two-part story), Aug.-Sept., 1933; *Warring Medicines*, American Boy, June-Sept., 1934; *Beaver Woman's Vision*, American Boy, July-Oct., 1935; *The Sacred Otter Bowcase*, Boy's Life, July-Aug., 1935

"Schultz deserves a prominent place in Montana history. His exciting stories rescued from oblivion many famous old Pikuni, from Lone Walker and Lone Bull to Running Eagle and Big Lake. He has engraved in the hearts of many men a certain nostalgia for Montana and the old Blackfoot country."

Denton R. Bedford
5452 East Rosewood Ave.
Tucson, Arizona

* * *

"I just received my copy of the fall (1960) issue of MONTANA and as usual I enjoyed it very much. The articles on James Willard Schultz especially interested me. I first came into contact with his work as a youngster in grade school back in the early thirties, and enjoyed reading his books so much that I decided to make a collection of all his works. I have been able to purchase all but seven which are as follows: *War Trail Fort*, *Danger Trail*, *Friends of My Life as an Indian*, *Alder Gulch Gold*, *Friends and Foes in the Rockies*, *Gold Dust*, and *Short Bow's Big Medicine*. . . .

"Keep up the good work on your articles on American Indians—they are terrific! An appreciative reader of MONTANA and also an admirer of J. W. Schultz."

Vide H. Jonasson
447 E. Linfield St.
Glendora, Calif.

* * *

"... I did like the way the [James Willard Schultz article] was handled . . . It was good including Helen West's map which I saw while in Browning and admired. Helen does painstaking work and hits on subjects both interesting and of real value historically. And good, too, the inclusion of the Flathead story and the Idaho-Montana fire. Good, all of this issue, I think . . .

"... Best source of supply for Schultz books is International Book Finders, Box 3003, Beverly Hills, Calif. I am told they have 25 autographed copies, also many books which have been collected from all over the world. . . ."

Jessie Donaldson Schultz
26 Hillcrest Drive
St. Helena, California

* * *

"... I only wish the article on [James Willard] Schultz [Autumn 1960] had appeared a year ago, for one old timer who would have enjoyed it will never read it. George Bolton, who lived with the Schultzes, and who had many friends on the Reservation, died on September 5th in his 83rd year. He read MONTANA from cover to cover, and never failed to find something that brought back memories and recollections of the years he spent as a cowboy in Montana and southern Alberta. He recently remarked that MONTANA Magazine had brought a new shine to his declining years. Your magazine and I have both lost a very dear friend. . . ."

Maxine Chattaway
Bar S Ranch
Nanton, Alberta



An historical purist, just finished with exhaustive research on one of the West's most fascinating river regions, expresses concern over the myths and fictions encountered. He says:

MUDDLED MEN HAVE MUDDIED THE YELLOWSTONE'S TRUE COLOR

by Mark H. Brown

HONEST MEN do make mistakes, and sometimes liars tell the truth. The result of these two possibilities, and numerous variations from them on what is accepted as history, can be striking at times. Although military intelligence and history are closely related, they have one striking difference in that the former is often carefully evaluated and classified according to its calculated reliability. Those who read history do not find their information so neatly labeled.

Sometimes material of sterling value is mingled with other bits and pieces of questionable origin, and woven into the thread of thought may be errors

from various causes. Sometimes a writer may have failed to correlate other pertinent information, or may have been ignorant of some salient fact: sometimes sources used in a compilation may have been colored by a desire for self glory, the wish to hide an unflattering fact, personal bias, or ignorance. Occasionally the error may be a mixture of various shortcomings. While this condition is not desirable in anything which purports to be a statement of fact, it has one great virtue in that it provides interesting possibilities for a discerning reader. It is impossible to predict where errors may be found, or whether they will be large

or small. However, all errors are significant in some degree and the search for them can be a fascinating sport.

The history of the Western Frontier has its share of errors—perhaps more than its share. Nor has any part of the West a monopoly on such mistakes, or any period of time. Territory-wise, the sampling of errors noted here involve only that part of the Yellowstone Basin which lies in southeastern Montana: time-wise, they cover a century and a half. And the list is not complete. In fact, perhaps the most striking—if the writer is correct—has been omitted because space does not permit its proper presentation.

The oldest enigma of the high plains is wrapped up in the problem of *where* did the two sons of la Verendrye and their companions go in 1742 after leaving the village of the "mantannes" on the banks of the Missouri when they began their search for the *Mer de l'Ouest*—the Pacific Ocean? The Chevalier de la Verendrye began his summary report for the governor of Canada with this statement: "We marched twenty days west-south-west . . ." How far did they go? What was the exact compass heading? No one knows. One eminent historian would have them travel as far as the Rocky Mountains, and another labored at great length to prove that they never left what is now North and South Dakota.

A realistic analysis indicates that when this little party made their first stop they were in the vicinity of Sheep

Mountain which lies northeast of Miles City, Montana. If this is correct, then the explorers wandered about in the lower Yellowstone valley (between the lower Powder and the Big Horn Rivers) during the fall and early winter, went with a war party to the northern end of the Big Horn Mountains, and then drifted southeast to the spot where the lead plate, bearing the date March 30, 1743, was buried near Fort Pierre, South Dakota.

It is strange that those who have searched for the answer to this riddle have—apparently—overlooked one extremely important bit of data. The journal states that during this fall and early winter travel they met eight bands of Indians. It is supposed that these represented a large number of people, and it is obvious that they were



CHEVALIER de la VERENDRYE, credited with being the first white man to enter Montana (January 1, 1743) was painted in 1912 by Artist E. S. Paxson. The original hangs in the House of Representatives lobby, State Capitol, in Helena. Frederic Remington's depiction of the Verendrye party being halted by Indians is reproduced at top of page 28.

Mark H. Brown, who with W. R. Felton authored "The Frontier Years" and "Before Barbed Wire," based on the photographs of L. A. Huffman, will see published next year his "Plainsmen of the Yellowstone," an exhaustive history of Montana's Yellowstone Basin. The accompanying article is the result of frustrations encountered during extensive research for this new book, due for release in late summer, 1961. A recognized authority on the history of the Northern Great Plains, Mr. Brown is a veteran of World War I. In 1930 he received his Ph.D. from Iowa State College. During World War II, Col. Brown served overseas for three years as an Air Force intelligence officer, followed by 3½ years as an instructor at the Air Command and Staff School and 4 years at Headquarters, Strategic Air Command. Besides his writing and research work, he operates Trail's End farm at Alta, Iowa.

living quite closely together. No explanation has ever been given as to *why* these people were congregated in this area. Undoubtedly they lived by hunting, and it is also reasonably certain that they were living where they were because of their own wishes. The one reason that could logically account for such a concentration of people would be an abundance of food. This thesis is in complete agreement with the writings of early travelers whose observations establish beyond question that the valley of the Yellowstone and the area immediately adjacent to the south, was the *finest hunting ground in the West*. It would appear that those who have studied the Chevalier journal have overlooked some of the significant statements in Clark's journal, the letters of Father De Smet, Captain Reynolds' report, and the writings of others.

The riddle of the la Verendryes is a good example of how easy it may be to overlook important data if one does not search widely for related information. Ignorance of some salient fact can be equally revealing as to the breadth of knowledge possessed by a writer or editor. Francois Antoine Larocque, who explored a considerable part of the Yellowstone Basin in 1805 (a year before Clark), left an excellent journal of his journey. While camped with the Crows along the Powder River, probably near the mouth of the Little Powder, he wrote:

I ascended some very high hills on the side of which I found plenty of shells of the *Cornu amonys Species* . . . likewise a kind of shining stone lying bare at the surface of the ground . . . they are of different size and form, of Clear water color and reflect with such force as a looking glass of its size. It is certainly those stones which have given the name shining to that Mountain.

Larocque was not only observing but was also well educated as is indicated by his correct identification of the fossils as coiled cephalopods or ammonites. But he could not identify the "shining" stones and one historian who edited a

version of the journal wrote a footnote in which he stated, "Larocque's statement is scarcely probable . . ."

This editorial comment is a comedy of errors apparently hinging around the appellation "shining mountains" which the Chevalier de la Verendrye is alleged to have applied to the mountains (Big Horns?) which he saw. As a matter of fact this term does not appear in the journal; quartz crystals—the alleged source of the "shining"—do not reflect light to any appreciable extent; and the editor was obviously ignorant of the mineral Larocque described! The only truth in the footnote was that Larocque was too far away to have seen the Big Horns. What this British trader described was obviously selenite, a crystalline form of gypsum, which is common in certain soils derived from shale. (In central Oklahoma they are responsible for certain badland hills being called the Glass Mountains.) Had Larocque's comment been particularly significant, its importance would have been lost with this interpretation.

These are examples of the honest sort of mistakes which everyone is likely to make from time to time. Less excusable are the insidious errors which have their beginning in a deliberate perversion of truth for personal ends, and these occur in many forms and sizes. Some are not difficult to recognize once the fundamental causes are understood. Occasionally, reputable writers repeat questionable accounts and thus compound the confusion. Two examples of this sort of misinformation may be found in Theodore Roosevelt's *The Wilderness Hunter*; versions of two well known incidents, one of which occurred on the Crow Reservation and the other on the Cheyenne Reservation. Both accounts leave much to be desired. In both cases, Roosevelt stated that his informant was an Army officer.

Official military reports can be a curious mixture of truth and, if not falsehood, at least something closely akin to it. This bias stems from the fact that no officer cared to report any-

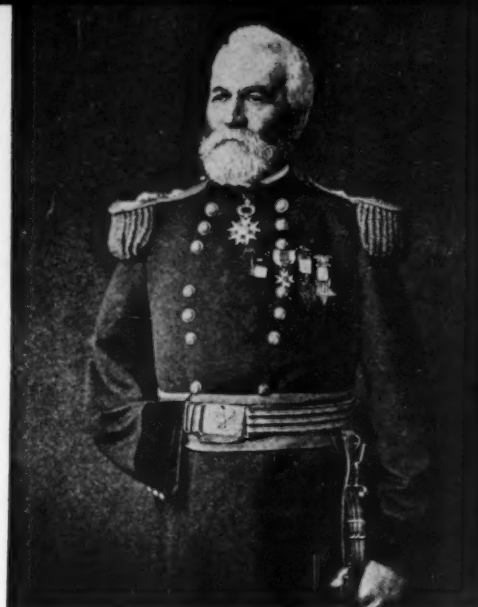
thing which would place either himself or his troops in a poor light. Furthermore — and this was particularly true in the years following the Civil War — competition for promotion was keen and anything that could be construed to be a creditable performance was likely to be squeezed for the last bit of publicity. An example of this sort occurred during the trouble with Chees-chi-bah-aish on the Crow Reservation in 1887.

This ambitious brave, also called Wraps-Up-His-Tail and Sword Bearer, created considerable disturbance before troops were called out and a small skirmish took place near Crow Agency. The *Great Falls Tribune*, which printed a reasonably accurate account of the trouble, stated in the final story:

The Cavalry now advanced upon the Indians, driving them into the bush. Sword Bearer was killed, being shot twice in the skirmish firing by troop



FIRE BEAR, Indian policeman at Crow Agency, shot the Crow brave Sword Bearer in 1887, according to the Indian account. The white men's version of the killing, at considerable variance, is but another example of how readily a simple story is mistakenly recorded and the error compounded over the years. This picture, taken in about 1891, was donated to the Historical Society of Montana by Ernest Woolston.



GENERAL O. O. HOWARD

G first cavalry, commanded by Captain K. K. Upham. Lieutenant J. B. Aleshire is said to have killed the great medicine man. Scout Fire-Bug also claims to have fired the fatal shot.



CRAZY HORSE, the restless Sioux chief, boasted that the white man's "magic box" would never take his "shadow". This rare picture, now in the S. J. Morrow collection at the University of South Dakota, is believed to be his likeness. Crazy Horse was stabbed to death when he resisted attempts to put him in the guard house when it was feared he would make another foray north with his warriors. The highly colored versions of some Indian-white actions involving Crazy Horse's Sioux are pointed out in this article.



GENERAL NELSON MILES

According to the Crow account, Sword Bearer received a minor wound in the skirmish, and then fled to the hills on the eastern side of the Little Big Horn River. His father, stung by this exhibition of cowardice, raced after him and forced him to return. When they reached the river, the son got off his pony and lay down on the bank to drink. While thus engaged, an Indian policeman named Fire-Bear came up and shot him in the back of the head. There seems to be no reason to doubt the Crow account for these Indians say that this shooting cost Fire-Bear, an overbearing but heretofore respected warrior, the respect which had previously been accorded him by the other men.

If the death of a single Indian cannot be reported accurately, it should follow that the larger the fight, the greater the temptation to exaggerate. The engagement between the Seventh Cavalry and the Nez Perce on the north side of the Yellowstone near the head of a dry wash named Canon Creek indicates what can happen when the temptation is great.

It will be recalled that when Chief Joseph, with General Howard trailing



CHIEF JOSEPH

doggedly in his rear, headed for the northeastern corner of the Yellowstone Park on his dash toward Canada, Colonel Sturgis and a large part of the Seventh Cavalry were located squarely in his path on the headwaters of Clark Fork. The astute Indian leader then proceeded to make a fool of the colonel by decoying him out of position, and then heading northward with an open field ahead of him. One trooper, who has since been exposed as a prevaricator, wrote — perhaps truthfully on this occasion—that “our old Colonel was hopping mad that the savages had outwitted him . . . [and] with many an explosive adjective, declared that he would overtake those Indians before they crossed the Missouri River if he had to go afoot and alone.”

Sturgis' men caught up with their quarry just after they had crossed the Yellowstone River and were preparing to work their way up through a break in the rimrock to the gently rolling plains just beyond. In his summary of operations within the Division of the Missouri for the year 1877, General Sheridan wrote:

The losses of the Indians in this engagement and in the pursuit on the following day, was twenty-one killed . . . and the number of ponies lost by the Indians was altogether about nine hundred.

If true, this would have been a creditable engagement. However, a Nez Perce warrior later stated that two or three men were wounded during the fighting on the first day and that three were killed by Crow scouts on the following day. The loss in horses did not exceed thirty or forty.

Which account is correct? In commenting about Sturgis' claim years afterward, the frontiersman who had charge of General Howard's Bannock scouts wrote dryly:

Several of my Indians hunted the ground over the next day and could find no dead Nez Percés to scalp. I don't say there were none killed, but if any had been their friends packed them off and cached them somewhere.

If the scouts could not find any bodies, the probability is that there were few if any. Also, this man's diary makes it plain that the troops did not get close enough to capture 500 ponies. (Sheridan did give the Crows credit for rounding up 400 of the alleged 900.) Someone did not tell the truth about this fight and in all probability it was the "old Colonel" who was red-faced at having met an Indian who was a better tactician than he.

General Nelson A. Miles was a capable Indian fighter—and an ambitious officer who, during Sitting Bull's war, was "bucking" for his star. He is also remembered as not being adverse to relating experiences in such a way as to enhance his own glory. Early in January 1877, as the major part of the last war with the Sioux was drawing to a close, Miles' men fought a skirmish along the upper Tongue River which was dignified by the title of the Battle of Wolf Mountain. The account in the general's memoirs, and the one in the autobiography of his chief of scouts, Yellowstone Kelly, do not stand up well under close scrutiny.

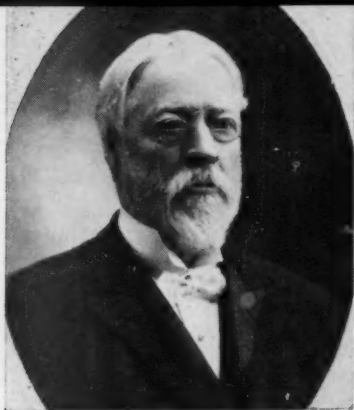
Hostiles had run off some cattle from the Tongue River Cantonment at the mouth of the Tongue River, and Miles had followed the raiders southward up

the valley. On the 7th, his scouts brought in eight women and children whom they had captured but a short distance in advance of the troops. These captives had been visiting a distant camp and were hunting for the village of Crazy Horse's Sioux which was, at that time, several miles farther south. A man who was with this little group escaped unnoticed, located the Oglala camp, and gave the alarm. A considerable force of warriors immediately rode out, attacked Miles' scouts, and stalled the advance.

Although much has been made of the supposition that this was an attempt to rescue the women, who were the wives of prominent warriors, this is not a realistic analysis of the situation. Less than six weeks before, Colonel Ranald Mackenzie and the Fourth Cavalry, together with a large force of Indian scouts, had descended like a thunderbolt on Dull Knife's Cheyennes in the Big Horn Mountains where they were camped near the headwaters of the Red Fork of the Powder. In the ensuing fight the Indians lost everything except the clothes they were wearing, what arms the men picked up as they left their lodges, and a small part of their horse herd. Coming as it did in the early winter, it was a terrible blow; and at the moment the survivors of this battle were in Crazy Horse's camp living in the lodges of their allies. Undoubtedly this skirmish, which Miles called the Battle of Wolf Mountain, was primarily a holding action to permit the camp to seek safety in flight—and not a fight over the possession of a few squaws and children.

The two accounts noted give a highly colored version of the action on the second day, the high point of which was the shooting of a Cheyenne "medicine man" named Big Crow. Miles wrote:

... the key of the position was a bluff to the left of the line of troops, and the sharpest fighting was for the possession of this ground. The Indians who held it were led by Big Crow who ... rushed out in front of the warriors,



attired in the most gorgeous Indian battle costume . . . , jumped up and down, ran in a circle and whooped and yelled . . . In the very midst of his daring acts of bravado, Big Crow fell, pierced by a rifle shot, and his loss, together with the success of the charge that had been made and the important ground gained, seemed to cause a panic among the Indians, and they immediately fled in utter rout up the valley . . .

Kelly related that the "ridge was level" and that the Indian "danced" along it for a distance of some forty yards "in a most graceful and nonchalant manner." The soldiers concentrated their fire upon him and finally he "tottered and disappeared from view."

The topography of this part of the field does not correspond with Kelly's description: and, as for the reason why the Indians broke off the fight, a soldier in the ranks wrote in his diary:

The firing ceased at 12 o'clock M. for it began to snow [so hard] that it was impossible for either of the parties to continue the combat.

The Cheyenne account, which is a straight-forward story, states that Big Crow was not a medicine man but a prominent warrior, and that there were only seven warriors with him on the top of this "key" butte. Big Crow decided to make a series of *bravery runs*—four being the required number. Leaving a protecting depression near the center of the top, he circled the edge of the butte in plain view of the soldiers who were concealed on the opposite side of a small, very narrow, detached ridge some two hundred yards away. On the third run he was

PAUL McCORMICK, industrious pioneer merchant, helped establish Fort Pease on the Yellowstone, ostensibly as a defense against Sioux and Crow depredations. Mr. Brown points out that this was a business venture, the object being to trade with the wolves and promote gold prospecting. But McCormick, who became one of Montana's leading businessmen before his death in 1922, had such a harrowing experience with hostile Sioux in 1875 that his hair turned white overnight.

knocked down, mortally wounded, and had to be dragged away on a buffalo robe by two of his companions. The author found one small bit of evidence which would tend to support the Indian account. Having located the most favorable spot from which to have sniped the Indian—according to the Indian marker — he kicked away the needles on the ground, which had fallen from an ancient juniper, and picked up three .45-70 shells of the vintage of the fight.

Although this incident was not highly important, both it and the Canon Creek fight point up the danger of accepting accounts written by participants without a careful evaluation. Perhaps one of the most useful indications of reliability is the character of the author, or the conditions under which the account was written. If either are suspect, the reader should be careful.

Although some things are relatively simple to analyze, others are considerably more complex. One of the more interesting incidents, from a de-bunking standpoint, is that of the relief of Fort Pease, at the mouth of the Big Horn River, in March 1876. The commonly repeated story is that the Sioux harassed this trading post so vigorously that it was necessary to send troops from Fort Ellis to escort the inmates back to Bozeman in order to save their lives. The true story of what happened is more interesting than the fictitious account and begins about four years before the date of the "relief."

In 1872, Paul McCormick, an enterprising Montana pioneer, was wagon master with an escort which went out from Fort Ellis to protect a party of Northern Pacific Railroad surveyors who were working out a line along the Yellowstone River east of where Living-



YELLOWSTONE RIVER AS SEEN FROM POMPEY'S PILLAR

ston is now located. The next year he set about organizing a party to go into the Yellowstone valley to prospect for gold. Military authorities looked with disfavor on this activity; and General Sheridan (then commanding the Division of the Missouri of which this area was a part) dispatched a telegram which eventually reached the commandant at Fort Ellis. This read, in part, "You can notify the members of McCormick's party that they will not be permitted to invade the Crow Indian Reservation to hunt gold . . ." The Crow Reservation at this time comprised that part of southeastern Montana which lay south and east of the Yellowstone River, north of the Montana-Wyoming line, and east of the 107th meridian; and this included a considerable area where it was thought gold might exist.

A year later (1874), the citizens of Bozeman organized the Yellowstone Wagon Road and Exploring Expedition. Ostensibly, the purpose of this organization was to explore the feasibility of a road connecting Bozeman and the (supposed) head of steamboat navigation on the Yellowstone—which was a point near the mouth of the Big Horn River. With tongue in cheek, the leaders of this activity promised to stay off the Crow Reservation. However, after they

reached the mouth of the Big Horn, the party invaded the Crow territory to prospect—which was undoubtedly what they intended to do from the first. They found traces of gold at the northern end of the Big Horn Mountains, and early in May were back at Bozeman. Items appearing in the (Bozeman) *Avant Courier* indicate that the members hoped to make a second effort to locate gold at a later date; but in September the secretary of the organization suddenly announced that it was for "Our very best interest" to drop the whole matter. The reason for this sudden change of heart was that the commanding officer of nearby Fort Ellis had received curt orders that if a second expedition started he was to destroy all their property, disarm the men, and arrest the leaders and confine them at the post. The military authorities had listened to enough double talk.

But the idea that there was gold to be found in this country would not die. In 1875, Paul McCormick, Zed Daniels, and an ex-Crow agent, "Major" Pease, took steps to establish a trading post on the north bank of the Yellowstone opposite the mouth of the Big Horn. The announced object of this venture was to trade with wolfers, whom they hoped would center their activities

around this post, and the Crows. Later, the proprietors ran advertisements in the *Avant Courier* which stated: "We have on hand a well selected stock for Hunters, Trappers, and Miners . . ." In view of the past attitude of the army officers, nothing was said at the time about prospecting—although thirty-six years later Pease told a pioneer who is still living that they were *very much* interested in prospecting.

The initial supplies for this post, which was named Fort Pease, were taken down the river from Benson's Landing (the Yellowstone River embarkation point) in mackinaw boats, and additional supplies were brought down later. It is significant to note that no difficulties with hostile Indians were reported in this phase of the activity, and the following March twenty-two boats were tied up at the landing. For a time the Sioux were troublesome about the post; and McCormick had one experience in an ambush that turned his hair white overnight. However, when winter came, some of the wolfers scattered out in little camps at some distance from the fort, apparently feeling no unusual concern about their safety.

In mid-winter thirteen of the group which assembled at the post went back to Bozeman. Among these were two of the traders, Benjamin Dexter and Paul McCormick. Stories now began to appear in the *Avant Courier* to the effect that the men were having fights with the Sioux "every two or three days" and "unless reinforcements are sent there we fear that the whole garrison will be massacred." Also, Dexter and McCormick signed depositions that the Crows were molesting the wolfers. Governor Benjamin F. Potts forwarded these statements to the Secretary of Interior who brought them to the attention of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. In this manner sentiment was whipped up to such an extent that on February 19, 1876, General Sheridan approved orders for a relief party to go to the aid of the *belieged* men.

The army, having agreed to rescue the unfortunate men at the post, was now stuck with the story that they were really in danger. Major James S. Brisbin of the Second Cavalry led the relief party and in the telegram he dispatched on arriving at Fort Pease he stated: "Saw no Indians but found five (5) war lodges here, of about sixty (60) Sioux who fled south." In the official report written after returning to Fort Ellis, even this nebulous statement was replaced by another even more indefinite indicating that the main villages had moved some distance away—how far the major did not know as his scouts never found them.

Brisbin's feeble comments about danger from hostile Sioux indicate that there is something amiss somewhere. Others were less reticent in their comments. E. S. Topping, one of the wolfers who later compiled the first history of the Yellowstone valley, wrote: "None of those at the Stockade but the traders wished to leave, but all were forced to go." A reporter for the *Avant Courier*, who wrote under the pseudonym of "U Know" and who may have been the editor, accompanied the expedition, and on his return the newspaper published the diary kept by this individual. Writing candidly and with cutting sarcasm this individual pointed out that no signs of Indians were seen, that the men at the post "spoke in harsh terms" of those who had evidently created the excitement, and summarized the activity by stating: "The whole affair resembled what is called a farce or wild goose chase, a great fuss about nothing, or with comparatively little or no foundation."

These comments are couched in kind words when compared to what Dexter E. Clapp, the Crow agent, had to say. This individual had been a general officer in the Confederate army and was, if his letters are a reliable indication, a very capable and discerning man. The deposition of Dexter and McCormick was eventually referred to him to answer inasmuch as both he and

his charges were accused. In a scathing letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Clapp pointed out that the Crow thefts were really not a serious matter and, furthermore, the wolfers were trespassing on the reservation. He charged that the accusations which stated that he had incited the Crows to acts of violence was "utterly false and malicious. The parties making it know it to be so."

These items disposed of, he proceeded to unmask the conniving of Dexter and McCormick as he saw it:

One object of the affidavit of McCormick and Dexter was to create a feeling that should assist in obtaining the aid of a military expedition to Fort Pease on the pretense of relieving men besieged there by the Sioux, but really that McCormick and Dexter might get their private property at Fort Pease transported safely to Bozeman.

The expedition . . . transported, perhaps a thousand dollars worth of property of McCormick and Dexter to Bozeman at an extra expense to the U. S. Government of from five to fifteen thousand dollars, and among other things, brought from Fort Pease and deposited across the river from the Agency, and on the Reservation, two barrels of Whiskey.

Soon after the order revoking the extension of the Agency was received, and thereafter for two weeks, that whiskey made this agency almost a pandemonium of drunkenness and brawling.

It was the whiskey that raised Clapp's anger to the boiling point. Less than a year before, he had moved the Agency seventy-three miles farther away from the protection afforded by Fort Ellis to get away from the disreputable saloons at previously mentioned Benson's Landing (near where Livingston stands today). Then two saloon keepers, Horace Countryman and Hugo Hoppe, had moved down the Yellowstone to a point near the mouth of the Stillwater River—which was as close as they could get to the new agency headquarters and still be off the reservation. Clapp had countered

this move by asking that the Crow Reservation be extended northward from the channel of the Yellowstone to the Yellowstone-Musselshell divide, which would have permitted him to force these whiskey peddlers to move. This extension was approved, then shortly afterward—as indicated in the above-noted letter—the order was rescinded. Curiously, "U Know" stated in his diary that there were *three* kegs of whiskey when Brisbin's party arrived at Fort Pease, and that soon after there were plenty of "red noses." It would appear that the rescue party and the men at the post disposed of one keg in short order!

Such is the true story of the relief of Fort Pease—there was actually no immediate danger from hostile Indians. What had happened was that no one found any gold, business was poor as trade with the Crows had not materialized to any great extent, and a full-scale war with the Sioux was about to get under way. The prospects at Fort Pease no longer looked bright. It had been easy to float the trade goods down the Yellowstone from Benson's Landing—but there was no simple and easy way to get them back safely. The easiest way—and it worked out perfectly—was to cry, "Wolf! Wolf!" and get the army to take over the task. What has happened since that time is that the illusion created by Dexter, McCormick, et al has persisted and the sarcasm of "U Know" and the caustic comments of "General" Clapp have been buried and forgotten.

Such is what is called "history." Those who read with blind acceptance all that has been recorded on the printed page often miss the pleasure of discovering its errors—whether excusable or otherwise. History read with a grain of salt has a wholesome, stimulating new flavor.

The mighty, turbulent Yellowstone has been muddied enough by nature. Historically, it can well afford some de-silting and purification.

FROM BUTCHER BOY TO BUFFALO HUNTER



EXCERPTS FROM THE UNPUBLISHED JOURNALS OF HENRY BIERMAN

The Historical Society of Montana was privileged, recently, to receive the detailed journals of Henry Bierman, who came to Montana Territory in 1882. He lived the life of a buffalo hunter, cattle buyer, homesteader, freighter, and railroad construction "gypo" while the frontier was yet new and adventuresome. The quiet humor, courage and good sense of Henry Bierman's own words and deeds, preserved by his daughters, have been carefully edited to this summary of Montana events.

Mr. Bierman's full journal tells of his birth in Germany in 1860, the accidental death of his mother, and the sale of all family possessions to provide steerage passage to New York in 1866. He recounts, tersely, early episodes in his life of hard work. When 14 years old, near Cleveland, he worked as a chore boy for \$8 a month, board and room. The next year, at the same wage, he became a butcher boy. Henry's hopes turned westward in the Spring of 1880. He spent several months shaving pig heads for the

Anglo-American Packing Co. in Chicago, becoming so proficient that he could shave up to 200 a day. Although the company continued to cut the price per head from 2c down to 1¼c, he was able to bring home a princely \$4 to \$4.50 a day.

The following year young Bierman moved on to Denver, his penchant for hard work this time leading to the making of bricks. He wheeled mud to the molders who made up to 10,000 bricks a day by hand. The pay: \$3 a day. A few years later he used this new skill in Montana. He helped make bricks for the first Northern Pacific railroad roundhouse in the new town of Billings.

Henry returned to the meat trade late in 1881, answering an advertisement for meat cutters in Laramie City, Wyoming Territory. He got the job—from Phillips & Jennings—at \$75 a month and board and room. His duties included killing and buying cattle, besides meat cutting. With typical honesty he confessed he tried to get on his first saddle horse from the offside.

Bierman's first cattle buying trip in Wyoming was a success. He bought 35 head at less than 5c a pound, but Phillips & Jennings soon went out of business, so he headed for the Yellowstone in Montana in the Spring of 1882.

Resourceful, humorous and kindly Henry Bierman thus began a span of typical Western adventure and hardy living which lasted until he was more than 80 years old, teaching his daughters how to live well in the outdoors with a minimum of frills and camping equipment. His narrative shares the pain of losing his young wife when his daughter, Ida, was born; hunting and pioneering; his fear of heavy-maned "buffalo wolves"; the shared happiness of a frontier homesteader's Christmas dinner; danger in calling the bluff of horse rustlers; pride in his Kalispell butcher shop and the great joys of his family life. The edited narrative, in his own words, and the affectionate epilogue by Mrs. Simon which brings his vigorous later years to a close, follow:

—The Editors

IN THE Spring of 1882 I joined the Yellowstone Colony for Montana, driving a team for Mark Jennings. We left Laramie May 10 with some 32 wagons and 100 head of loose cows and horses for C. B. Mendenhall's cow outfit. This was my first experience in camping out. We traveled by easy stages, laying over Sundays. Roads were poor and there were no bridges, but all went well until we reached the Powder River, where we found some 30 or 40 emigrant wagons waiting for the river to go down.

We built a raft of dead cottonwood logs, 18 to 20 inches thick, and tied it to a tree until the next morning. That night we dug an approach on the bank. Our night herder brought in the horses at daylight and everybody was busy but slow to hitch up and drive to the raft, being leary as to whether it would carry a loaded wagon.

After breakfast I hitched my team and pulled for the raft. Mr. Mendenhall asked if I could swim and when I said I couldn't he told me to unhitch my team, that someone must go across

with a team and pull the raft. "It won't matter if you can't swim," Mendenhall said, "you stay with the horses and they'll get you across. In swimming water, roll off, but hang to the harness. Don't climb for the horses' heads."

I discarded all loose articles on me. With stay chains, clevis, wiffeltrees and rope attached to the wiffeltrees, I started playing out the rope as I advanced in the water. I got into swimming water for a short time, but made shore easy with a light wagon. With a loaded wagon on the raft, it would ground on the far shore in 2½ feet of water. So I would wade in with the team, hook onto the end of the tongue, and jerk the wagon off the raft, pulling for shore and into the brush. After bringing over three outfits I got help. All the teams got over safely. The raft was then turned over to the emigrants in return for two gallons of whiskey.

At Tongue River, which was the next bad river to cross, we found an old Government military bridge in bad shape, but we repaired it and pulled the wagons over by hand and the horses were led over one at a time. At Buffalo, Wyoming we laid in fresh supplies. At the boundary of Montana we

The voluminous notes kept by Henry Bierman were assembled by two of his three daughters, Mrs. John D. (Esther) Simon of Oswego, Ore., and Dr. Jessie M. Bierman of Berkeley, Calif., after his death in 1943. Mrs. Simon, born in Kalispell, attended Montana State University and graduated from Milwaukee-Downer College with a degree in home economics. Mrs. Simon later received her master's degree in nutrition at the University of Washington. She is the mother of two sons and the grandmother of one.

Dr. Jessie Bierman graduated from the University of Montana in 1921, studied medicine at Rush in Chicago and practiced pediatrics in San Francisco before returning to Montana to serve as Director of Child Health with the State Board of Health (1936-38). Her Public Health career includes service with the U. S. Childrens Bureau in Washington, D. C.; directorship of Maternal and Child Health and Crippled Children's Services in California; two periods in Germany as consultant to the U. S. Military Government and the Unitarian Service Committee; with the United Nations World Health Organization as consultant in India; chief of the section on Maternal and Child Health at Geneva; and as a member of the panel of experts on child health. Since 1947, Dr. Bierman has been a professor in the University of California's School of Public Health in Berkeley.



found beautiful country, good water and plenty of good grass, an ideal stock country. But I was headed for the Yellowstone.

We crossed the Custer Battlefield on the Little Big Horn River on June 17. Here the Indians killed Custer's whole command, nearly 300, June, 1876, six years before I was there. At Fort Custer, we crossed the Big Horn River on a ferry and June 22 we crossed the Yellowstone near Colson on a ferry.

A few days after, I went to work at a brickyard, making brick for the Northern Pacific Railroad roundhouse at Billings. The Northern Pacific was then building through Montana.

A few weeks after starting to work, I located a homestead on the Musselshell River, and made final proof in 1887. In August, 1939, 52 years later, I visited the area and found that the first cabin I ever built on the homestead was still standing, badly rotted at the bottom, but the dirt roof and a few logs were still in place.

After the brick making was over in September, I bought a .45-90 Sharps rifle for buffalo and a team and wagon and headed for the buffalo range. When

I got a load I hauled in the meat to Colson and Billings where it brought 5 and 6 cents per pound. This was getting toward the end of the big buffalo herds. Buffalo had been staple meat, along with elk, antelope and deer. Most of the hides were shipped east to make buffalo coats for soldiers. Few cattle were used as meat in the west in those days; it was all shipped east. No branded cattle were sold on the range unless the brand was vented, thus making possession of a branded hide evidence of rustling.

Hunting Buffalo and Antelope

On my first trip out for buffalo, Charles Dewey was with me. He was a partner in Dewey and Brown, contractors for the Northern Pacific Hotel in Colson. We became acquainted when he located a claim near mine at the head of Deer Creek.

I went alone on my second buffalo hunt and made camp on a low flat. The next morning I started up on the bench and saw a small bunch of antelope coming towards me with some cattle. I could just see their heads. Since



antelope was considered better meat than buffalo, I dropped back and went below the hill to meet them. As I got near enough to shoot, I raised up and saw the antelope and cattle stop. Between them and me was a pack of some 20 buffalo wolves, now commonly called coyotes. They stopped and stared at me, their manes raised, and they seemed to be licking their chops. I sure was scared, but decided that if they would let me alone, I would them. I started to back away and soon everything started to run, except the wolves. They stayed bunched together and I fired one shot at them but did not wait to see what I had done. I went to camp for the rest of the day.

Some of these animals were nearly the size of northern timber wolves, but I learned later that they are not dangerous to man. I had lost a good chance to kill some game. These coyotes were called buffalo wolves because they were heavy in the shoulders and had heavy manes and of course because they lived on the large buffalo herds. When buffalo became scarce they killed cattle and gave a lot of trouble to stockmen during the eighties. They traveled in small bunches, working up to cattle or buffalo, following quietly at a short distance. Whenever any cattle got tired and fell back, the wolves would jump in, some at the head, others at the hamstring, which they cut, the poor critter sinking down behind. The wolves kept tearing until they got at the flesh and started eating while the critter was still alive and bawling. The stockmen,

as well as the territory, offered a good bounty and this helped to clean them up. One method used was to kill poor crippled cattle during roundup, fill them with strychnine and leave them for the wolves.

On one buffalo hunting trip, I headed for a new camp with a good spring and shelter. Traveling with a wagon in about 8 inches of snow is tiresome work for the horses, even with a light load. As evening came on, I was not sure how far I was from the spring. Since the horses were tired from pulling up a long swale, I made camp in the low ground for the night. When morning came, a high wind was blowing and although I spotted the spring I could not take down or put up my tent in the increasing wind. I circled around and found my horses some two miles from camp, drifting with the wind. When I got back to camp about 3:00 in the afternoon, I was chilled to the bone. After feeding the horses some oats, I started to make a fire in my stove but found that the wind had turned into the worst warm chinook I had ever experienced and I could not find a dry place to strike a match.

I finally gave up, took the nosebags off the horses, left one tied, and crawled into bed with everything on, including my boots, and covered up with the tarp over my head and matches in my shirt pocket to keep them dry. I woke up when I heard the tent tearing and felt the ridge pole fall over the bed. I did not move for



I was thawed out and comfortable, but it was still blowing. After some time, I felt a heavy load on my bed and I could not straighten my legs. I found my bed was wet underneath, but no wind was blowing. I struck a match and my watch showed 7:00 o'clock. Pushing the tarp back, I found the sun shining. I was lying in a good stream of water, with the snow gone. I waded out, thankful I had kept my boots on, spread my bedding on a sidehill to dry, and went to investigate the damage. My grub box was something to look at. The horse had backed up to the side of the tent, tearing it and stepping on the rim of my grub box, exposing the contents and filling it with horse chestnuts!

I soon had a fire going and breakfast made—I had had nothing to eat since breakfast the day before. I went over the hills, found a bunch of buffalo, and got four of them. I made two great shots that day. As I got to the buffalo, they were laying down and I could see one hump and one head chewing his cud. Taking a bead on the head, I shot and he rolled over. I counted 45 steps to his nose. The other one was getting quite a way off, but he suddenly dropped, spreading his hind legs apart, his front legs folded under and laying upright.

I dressed the three I had shot and approached the fourth very slowly with some yells and finally a kick on his rump, but he was dead. I supposed I had broken his back, but in taking his hide I could find no mark where the

bullet had entered. In cutting his hams off I found a bloody streak through the pelvis opening, ranging forward through a kidney and the lungs were badly torn and the forequarters full of blood. I found the bullet in perfect shape, dented very lightly on the side. It had entered just under the tail, followed through the pelvis and along the backbone, lodging in the lung cavity. A shot in 10,000!

In the winter of 1884-85, Clarence Van Wagnen and I stopped at a cabin 20 miles north of Billings on the Benton stage line. We were out of meat. O'Neil, a sheep man, said there was a band of antelope along the rimrock about three miles from the cabin. I started out next morning for the antelope, Clarence going for the mail.

The day was bright. I did not find the antelope on the rimrock, but in a sagebrush bottom far below. It was quite a drop down into a snow bank, but I took a chance and dropped down with just my head out of the soft snow when I landed. I managed to work my way out, but my high top boots were filled with snow and by the time I got to the antelope and killed three, the snow in my boots was melting. When I started for camp, about sundown, the wind started and it turned cold.

I sighted the cabin but still had to cross a sagebrush bottom with 18 inches of snow, frozen on top. My feet were freezing, but I knew I had to keep moving. I could see no smoke at the cabin, but I finally made it. Two pair of woolen socks stayed in the boots when I pulled them off, and my feet were red with crystal ice on them. Jamming my feet into a pail of icy water, the water felt warm. If I had had another half mile to go on that flat, I would not be writing this. It was the worst pain I ever experienced in my feet.

On another of my hunting trips for buffalo, I shot four out of one bunch. Three went down, but one had a hind

leg broken above the hock and he laid down. After dressing the others, I started for him. He allowed me to get within 200 yards before he got up, gave a snort, threw up his tail and charged, head down. I got busy and put two .45 slugs into him but this experience showed me that buffalo will charge when wounded. I got a good load of meat.

On arriving at my cabin on the Musselshell in late December, I heard that no more wild meat could be sold in Billings after December 31. This gave me the jitters, since I was out of money and oats for my horses and no grub for myself. Having the meat of six buffalo and several antelope at the cabin, but nothing else, I had to do something. I could not take a chance of losing my team and meat by going to Billings with it, so I loaded a buffalo ham and an antelope saddle and started for Billings to haul in wood to get oats and grub. I made camp about eight miles from town in some hills where there was some wood. Shaking out my flour sack that evening, I had enough for 12 biscuits, the size of hen's eggs, a little coffee and syrup, but plenty of meat. It was one biscuit a meal for awhile.

The next day I cut two good loads of wood, snaked it to where I could drive with the wagon and load it. I put one load on the wagon for an early start. I got to Billings in the afternoon, sold it for \$6.00, hunted up the Deputy Sheriff and told him of my trouble with the meat. "Oh, bring it in, but stop at Colson and come up and let me know first and I will make myself scarce about town," he said.

At that time, Billings, being in Custer County with Miles City as county seat, over 200 miles east, had only a Deputy Sheriff. I pulled out next morning for the other load of wood which I had already engaged for \$6.00. Then I headed for my meat, which was frozen solid and made some load. On this trip, I worked three horses,

two in harness and one by the saddle horn with rope attached to the brake ratchet. The horses were not shod.

Colson, where I arrived that evening, was almost abandoned, since almost everybody had moved to Billings. The only ones left in Colson were idle men without work. Buffalo meat was their main food so I found a quick sale for part of my load of meat and by 8:00 o'clock that evening I had money in all pockets. I had no scales—just sold it at so much a chunk, estimated weight at 6c per pound. I sold about half my load that evening or 1,500 pounds. The next morning I rode my saddle horse to Billings and met up with the Deputy Sheriff, who suggested I go to the extra gang camp, where I had sold meat before. He said he would make himself scarce in Park City. The extra gang took all the meat I had left and the next day I bought grub and oats to last me until spring. This was the end of my buffalo hunting days.

Horse Rustling Days

Horse rustling was the principle thing in those days—well organized. I lost my saddle horse to rustlers in the fall of 1883 and so did Charles Dewey at whose place I was stopping. They were gone from early fall.

When coming in from one of my hunts, I found a note on the door saying that Dewey's horse was near the Hill & Hightower cow ranch down the river about 30 miles. I at once headed down for the place, arriving at the ranch in the evening. I put my horse in the barn and made myself at home. After supper, while sitting around smoking, the talk drifted to horse stealing. One of the boys told about being with two of his neighbors when they picked up two "stray" horses, one dragging a rope. That sounded familiar, because my lost horse had a rope dragging, being hard to catch. The fellow said he'd sure like to get them out of the neighbors' herds, because he was sure they didn't belong to them. Then I told him I might be able to give him

a little help, that it was my interest in those horses that had brought me down.

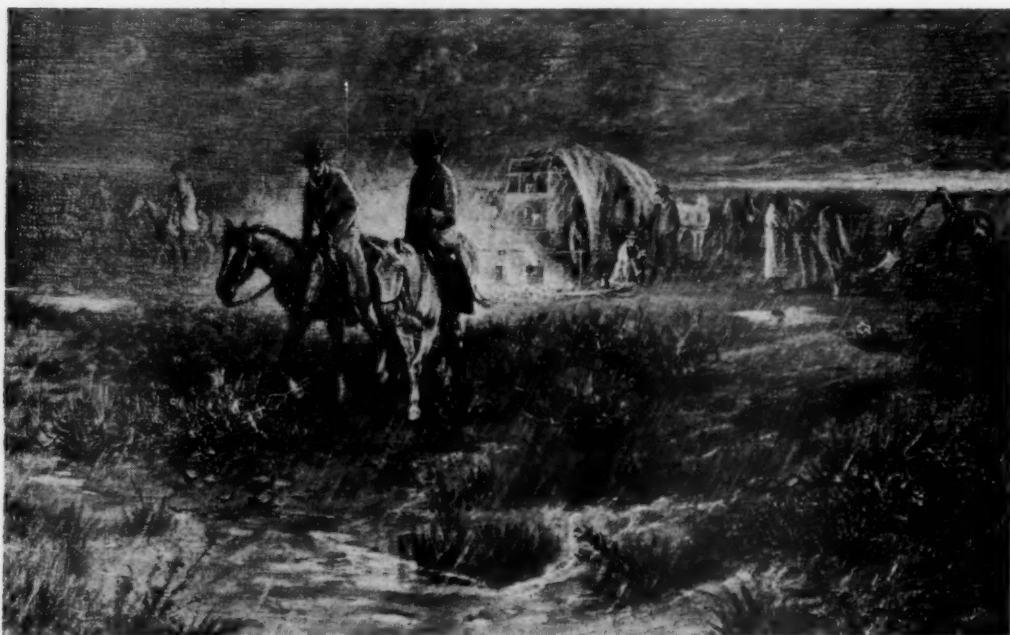
He said, "Big George has the bay and McNeil the blue." Big George was a well known tough character in that part of the country.

The next morning when I was ready to start, Hightower said: "Don't take any chances. That Big George is a mean cuss. Just see those fellows and make claim for the horses. If they give them up O. K., if not, don't start an argument. Just come back and we will see that you get them."

"Yes, I do," he replied.

"Well, ride the horse back and you won't have to pack your saddle. I am going after the other horse you boys picked up."

So we rode to his place, left him and his saddle, and I continued on to the McNeil place, where I found the other horse and it was turned over to me. I made a demand on McNeil for the use of the horse and the time I had lost hunting for it. The best he could do was dig up \$10.00, which I accepted and started back to Big George's. On arriv-



I started down the trail, my .45 laying in front of me in the saddle. I had gone about a mile when a horseman came toward me. He was crossing the river. I waited on the bank until he came up and riding in front of him with a "Good Morning", I asked, "Are you Big George?" He said he was.

"You are riding a horse branded on the left shoulder that doesn't belong to you. I am after him." I had recognized the horse as he was crossing the river. He got off at once and started taking off the saddle.

"Hold on a minute," I said. "You live below here don't you?"

ing I asked for the long rope my horse was dragging, which he gave me. Then I told him I had a damage claim against him for taking the horse without my permission; I had wasted time hunting for him and told him that I had full dope on him, so if he was not looking for more trouble he'd better make full settlement. He offered me a mowing machine and rake, if I would pay Bud McAdue in Billings \$50 which he owed McAdue on back payments. I agreed. So I made my bluff stick. When such guys found you had the real dope on them they usually turned yellow.

C. M. Russell

In the Winter of 1883 and 1884 I was on my way to Billings and stopped at Antelope Stage Station. When the stage came in I had dinner with Hayes, the driver, Tex Lambert, the swamper, and a young fellow passenger. After the stage left, I went into the stock tender's room and the tender, Jack Satterswhite, showed me a piece of brown paper lying on the table, with some drawing on it made with a lead pencil. Satterswhite said: "That Russell kid on the stage drew that. He is always drawing pictures."

You could recognize the driver and swamper in the picture from the way they were dressed and the six horses of the stage. They had a bob sleigh. The picture had a line underneath: "Colder than Billy be d.....!" The young man was the great Charles Russell, cowboy artist, in later years.

Horse Sense

Early in November, 1884, we had our second election in Yellowstone County. I was staying at the Antelope Stage Station and my voting precinct was Roundup on the Musselshell at the mouth of Halfbreed Creek, some 30 miles away. I had promised a friend, Ed Camp, who was running for County Treasurer, to go and look after his interests.

I stayed in Roundup until after 4:00 o'clock. There was no trail to follow, just a cross-country trip through the Bull Mountains. It soon got dark and the trick was to get through the mountains—the prairie was easy. My saddle horse, Tanner, wandered for quite awhile, but suddenly as we were crossing a ridge, he put his nose to the ground, threw up his head with a quick jerk and started up the ridge with a free walk. Since the horse was so eager, I got off, struck a match and found some wagon tracks which I had noticed that morning. Tanner brought us out on the prairie and we reached home at 11:30 P. M.

In the Spring of 1884 I started cross country with my team for Fort Maginnis where the Collar mine was putting up a stamp mill. I worked my team hauling rock for the foundation and molded brick until the mill was finished. Then I sold my team and wagon to a sheepman and worked in the post restaurant at Fort Maginnis. I wanted to learn something about cooking and when winter came I moved to Maiden, working in the hotel until the Spring of 1885.

A Young Girl From Iowa

After returning to my ranch in the Spring, Tom Wadsworth came to get me to look after a bunch of sheep he had at the head of Deer Creek during lambing. After that was over and they had been dipped and cleaned from scab and turned on new range for the summer, I started to put up hay for Wadsworth and Co. Charles Dewey and I put up 700 tons of wild hay. The deal with Wadsworth & Co. did not materialize and we had the hay on our hands. I hauled hay to Billings all winter to get money to pay for putting it up. We hired a young girl from Iowa who was raised on a farm, to do the cooking. She had a small girl with her for company.

The first morning after breakfast, the cook sent the little girl to ask where the butter, milk, eggs and meat were. I said, "Tell the cook I will be in and show her." Pulling out a sack of dry salt pork sides, I said to her, "Here is our meat and lard in this sack. Cows in this country don't give milk for butter. Make flour gravy and syrup for smoothing the bread."

The poor girl was dumbfounded and stared at me. But she soon adapted herself to conditions and made a good cook—so good that a few years later, on April 3, 1887, we were married.

The hay venture turned out badly and we traded most of what was left in the spring to cattlemen for horses and I went to freighting, which paid quite well.



Freighting On The Plains

These were the years of my life that I enjoyed being out of doors all the time, winter and summer. Most roads were as nature made them. If you could not pull all three wagons, you dropped two and pulled one. If you got in a mud hole you dug out by putting your jack screws under the axle, raising the wheel and tamping sagebrush under the wheel to rest on. If this didn't work you had to unload and pull to hard ground.

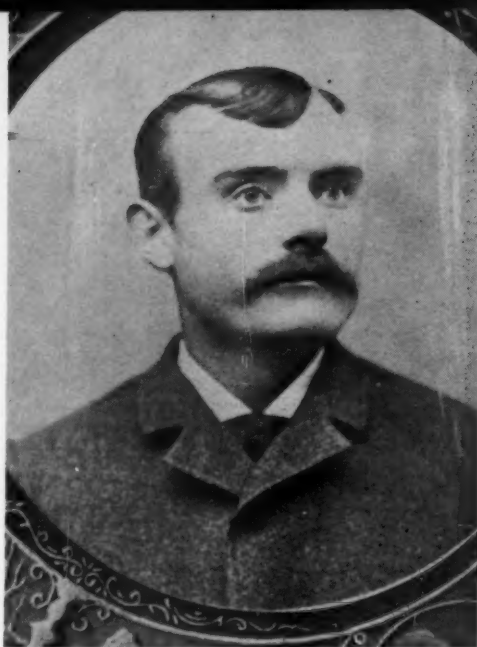
On one trip to Greybull, Wyo., I could do neither, being loaded with a mowing machine and hardware too heavy to unload in a mud hole. I went down in Sage Creek, a shallow, muddy bottom, and our stock of 16 head could not make the pull. While thinking it over, it came to my mind what to do and I said to my partner, "Let's unhitch and have dinner and after that I will pull that wagon out with Bill and Jerry alone."

My partner said he thought I was nuts, but while he was getting something to eat I crawled under the wagon with a chain to attach the hind axle to the front axle, so that when the hard pull came I would not pull the front

axle from under the load. I looked like a hog wallowing in mud. Then I cut a pole about 18 feet long, 8 inches at the butt, and hauled it to a cottonwood tree by the road ahead of the wagon. I then laid the heavy chains from the front axle, circled the tree, fastened the chain to the heavy end of the pole which was back of the tree. I then hitched the team to the small end, leaving the heavy end about two feet past the tree and the other end 16 feet. This made a pry, and the load had to come. By taking new holds often, we pulled out and made our trip without unloading.

The road to Lewistown was a very good freight road with good feed and water, no bad hills or mud holes, but scarce on wood. At Halbert there were alkali beds which were bad in the spring. On one trip to Cottonwood, before the frost was out, I loaded back with potatoes, dry hides and barley sacks and had to unload twice before reaching Savina. The road across the Crow reservation into Wyoming was bad. Water was short in some stretches and I would drive part of the night to reach it. In the late 1880's a few bridges were built across streams, but most were crossed by ferry or fording.

HENRY BIERMAN was 25 years old and had been in Montana Territory three years when this picture was taken in Billings. He had a homestead on the Musselshell which he proved up in 1887, and was enjoying a life of freedom as a freighter and hunter.



The year 1886 was very dry. Water in the Missouri River got low early and the steamboats could not make Fort Benton so a lot of freight was left at Bismarck, N. D. and reshipped to Billings. There were not enough teams to take care of it before winter set in. Clarence Van Wagnen and I loaded out of Billings for the Judith Basin on December 19, 1886, stopping at Ubet, Philbrook, and Utica with a great many "Monkey Ward" boxes for Christmas, a great mixture of a load, including four swellbody cutters. The roads were fine; no snow, but cold. We drove stage time part of the way and reached Ubet, 100 miles, in five days, the day before Christmas. We unloaded some and pulled three miles to Buffalo Creek and camped in a snowstorm. Christmas day it stormed hard all day and we celebrated Christmas in camp. After breakfast I told Clarence, "You take care of our stock and I will get us a real Christmas dinner."

Christmas Dinner Shared

We had antelope and cottontail rabbits. I roasted two rabbit saddles and an antelope ham, baked a dried apple pie, boiled some frozen potatoes and made sour dough biscuits. When all was ready, about 4:00 o'clock, and the tent tied for the night, we seated ourselves on our bed roll, ready to eat. Then a man stuck his face in the tent and called, "Say, ain't this an awful day?" His face was covered with snow.

"Come in stranger, come in," we said. He did, and we asked him to share our Christmas dinner.

He hesitated, saying, "I am here to ask you to come to our place and have dinner with us. My wife feels so lonesome. It is her first Christmas away from her folks in Kansas. We left there this spring and have homesteaded across the valley about one-half mile."

When he looked over our food supply he said we were better fixed than they were but that he and his wife would like our company. Since we had not yet touched our dinner, we decided to go to his cabin, taking our roast meat and apple pie. We found a very pleasant woman and a small baby—quite a change from our tent. We could stand up and walk about, even though it was only a one-room affair. A white tablecloth! White curtains at the window! How long we stayed, I don't know, but it was late when we headed for our tent. On looking back on this happening and the spirit that brought it about, I realize it made a deep impression on my mind that will never rub off.

Hard Winter of 1886-87

The next morning the storm had let up and we decided to move on. We took over a saddle of antelope for the young couple and bade them goodbye and have never seen them since.

After several days of travel, we finished up at Utica and turned back. On New Year's Day we loaded oats at Frank Draper's on Swimming Woman Creek, the winter's feed for our horses.

The afternoon after leaving Draper's we came in sight of two bands of antelope and decided to stop and kill our winter meat supply. The next day, taking one wagon, we brought the ten an-



telope we had killed to camp. During the night a storm broke and it stormed for five days, one of the worst I ever experienced. In the afternoon of the fifth day, it cleared and was cold. We were camped in tall sagebrush, but there was nothing in sight when it cleared—everything was buried under deep snow. The next morning we hitched up to move as we wanted to get to my ranch on the Musselshell where I had a comfortable cabin and stove, and where we could walk upright. It took four hard days to make the 18 miles. We had to shovel snow all the way. It was January 12, 1887.

Here we were met by the worst sight of a lifetime: cattle everywhere, bawling for feed. For three or four days they would go down the river, then turn and go up again, eating everything they could get hold of. The loss was something like 80 to 85 percent when we left the place on February 18. Dead cattle lay everywhere. The sheep men fared no better. We cut cottonwood trees for our horses and gave them two feedings of oats a day. Our oats were running low so we headed for Billings. A chinook was on and soon grass showed above the snow and our horses were safe, but it was too late to save the cattle.

This was the winter that started Charlie Russell to fame. He was looking after Kaufman and Stadler's cattle in the Judith. The firm made inquiries about their cattle, condition and losses. He drew a picture of a lone cow

humped up and very poor and a coyote watching her, and marked it, "The Last of 5000."

My first trip into the Judith was in the spring of 1887. On my return, I stopped in the gap and loaded sheep pelts for a sheep man. It was his entire herd, some 2,000 head. On top of his sheepshed lay a dead cow. Under a rock shelter on the Musselshell below Savina, I saw where cattle had laid down side by side, never to rise again. As we arrived at my cabin it looked as though a band of sheep had camped there, but it was really a band of antelope that had drifted onto the river bottom and hung around the cabins during the storm and had pulled out again before we arrived.

One of our neighbors fed all the hay they had in their bed ticks to save a milk cow and we gave them some of our oats and antelope to help them through.

Life At Billings, 1887

In the Spring of 1887 I began looking for a house in Billings, M. T., to set up housekeeping and I had things fairly well arranged when my former cook, Ida Showers, arrived from her home in Iowa. We were married Sunday, April 3, 1887, at May Masterson's home in Billings. I loaded for the upper Musselshell two days later with supplies for a sheep ranch and brought back a load of sheep pelts.

In the summer of 1887 we built our brick home in Billings and moved into it the last of November. After one more freighting trip to Lewistown, my brother, Fred, and I set up a wood camp 12 miles from Billings, planning to spend the winter cutting and hauling wood. Leaving Fred at the camp early in January, I rode into Billings in a bad storm, took cold and was down with tonsillitis for three weeks. I went out to see Fred on a warm day late in January and found him afoot, all the horses having drifted away in the storm. He had heard from the stage

IDA SHAWERS BIERMAN, who married Henry Bierman in Billings April 3, 1887, is pictured on her wedding day. She died a year later when their daughter, Ida, was born. Young Henry's touching story of feeding his infant daughter concord grapes to save her from dread scurvy is told in this article. Ida Bierman, who lived for many years in Kalispell, is now Mrs. Frank Marsh of Portland, Ore.

driver that the horses were near Fairview, 30 miles away.

Leaving my saddle horse with Fred, I started for Billings the next morning. When I got to Five Mile Creek, it was 100 feet wide with muddy water and slush snow was floating on top. Although there was a bridge about five miles below, I did not care to make those extra miles since I would get in Billings long after dark and we were expecting an increase in our family. So I stripped my clothes off, got a piece of pole and waded in, my clothes tied in a bundle on my head. It was not bad for awhile until I reached the center of the creek and the water went over my shoulders. By steadying myself with the pole, I could just feel the bottom with my toes. When I finally got across, I sure was cold. I made it home before dark and found Mrs. Mendenhall was with my wife. Our little girl, Ida, made her appearance the next afternoon, February 2, 1888. My trouble came a few days later when my wife died and left me with a 5-day-old baby to care for.

I took my wife to her old home in Iowa for burial and left Ida with the Van Wagnen family, where she remained for nearly six years. They had a cow and the baby was started on her milk and did well for six months, or until the cow went dry and they had to try other cow's milk. None could be found that would agree with her, and she ran down. She had a blue color and cried when she was touched. The doctor could do nothing for her. I was in from a trip and while up town I bought a basket of concord grapes for the Van Wagnen children. I took a grape, removed the seeds, and put it to the baby's mouth. After she got the taste, she grabbed my hand with both of hers. She could not get enough.



By giving her a small amount at a time for a few days, she could again drink her milk and in a few weeks' time she was much improved. In later years it was pointed out to me that this was probably a case of scurvy.

More Freighting

In the Spring of 1888, after returning from Iowa, I loaded for Red Lodge with black powder for the coal mines. They had been crossing the Yellowstone River on the ice all winter, but when I arrived at the crossing about noon, it did not look safe to me for a long team. Soon another team came and he looked at it the same way. I had a buckboard and this we used to haul our freight, loading about 500 pounds at a time and using my herd horse as power. It took us all afternoon.

Our next trouble was in crossing Rock Creek. Just above the crossing, a large ice jam had formed and as I got about half way over the jam broke and piled up against my lead wagon and pushed some of my horses down, the ice going over them. One horse stayed under water so long I thought I had lost him. I unhitched all the horses and got them to shore, then got hold of the bridle of the one under water. By giving him a pull with the current, he finally rolled to his feet and made for shore. It took two hours to get the wagons out.

On my return to the Yellowstone, we found the ice out but no ferry working. I laid there five days. Other teams were waiting to cross, but the ferry man was in no hurry to put his boat in, even with our help. Tired of the long wait, I took my wheel horse, Bill, and tried the ford a half mile away. The river was wide but not deep, coming just to the horse's side. We tied our wagon boxes down Sunday morning and pulled for the ford, and in an hour's time we were all across: seven outfits, with a saving of \$6.50 each for ferry toll.

In the fore part of September, 1888, I loaded for the Judith. It was a cold rainy day in Billings and I laid over that day, it being Saturday. Sunday morning it was still below zero and

side I put an extra wagon sheet around the wheels on the opposite side to hold the heat. These three logs made a slow fire all night. In the morning it was storming good and it took me until 11:00 o'clock to find my horses and get started. I did not reach Lewistown until dark. Hartop immediately demanded that I unload his apples at once and I told him that I had kept a fire around the wagon all night to keep them from freezing and if he couldn't carry them across the street he would have to wait for me to deliver them in the morning. He soon had help to carry them over, as DeWitt had done, and both were well pleased when they found the apples not frozen. Hartop gave me free board and lodging for the night with whiskey thrown in.



In the late fall, perishable goods, such as apples or beer were hauled only at the owner's risk.

Christmas—1888

the wagons were so frozen to the ground that I had to use the jack screw to break loose each wheel before starting. But the freeze made the road good.

On my next trip, early in October, I loaded for Lewistown with my lead wagon full to the bows with boxes of apples for M. M. DeWitt and Hartop, the latter a Lewistown hotel owner. The weather held good until I got to the Judith and then it stormed good. I camped at Rock Creek the night before I reached Lewistown, going to the Hoag Brothers ranch nearby to buy three logs for firewood. On the windy

I was loaded for Lewistown and camped at Antelope Stage Station, twenty-five miles from Billings. The stock tender there was a young man, and his wife who was soon to become a mother. The next day, Christmas, was stormy and I did not find my horses until noon. While looking for the horses I saw a small bunch of antelope in a low ravine out of the storm. After feeding my horses, I took my rifle and herd horse to get an antelope, when the little woman said, "I wish you would get one for us, too. We have not had fresh meat for a long time."

I told her I would try and I did get two. I tied them to the tail of the herd horse and turned him loose. He went to camp and delivered the antelope. In the meantime, the young stock tender had filled three burlap sacks with hay, sewed them and laid them in the back of my tent which just made a perfect bed. I enjoyed that bed hugely, better than laying on frozen ground. And the young people enjoyed the antelope.

I felt sorry for the little woman in the condition she was in, far away from any medical help and six miles to the nearest human being. Her husband came over to my tent that evening and I told him how I had lost my wife ten months before, right in Billings. I urged him to move her at once, not by stage, but get a sleigh from his neighbor and move her slow. But he had waited too long, when her time came he rushed to his neighbor. By the time they came back, the little woman, being left alone, had died.

Leaving the stage station the next morning and making no stop at noon, I arrived at Painted Robe Creek in the afternoon, minus my herd horse, Babe. Nor was he at camp the next morning. I went on without him and made the trip back to Savina. The stage driver from Billings told me Babe was at Fairview, about one-half of the way between Antelope Station and Painted Robe and that the horse visited the stage horses when they passed every day. I got to Fairview the next evening and Babe came a mile along the road to meet me, as far as he could see the outfit.

Railroad Building

I continued freighting until the spring of 1889 and then started building railroad grade for the Northern Pacific. The old String Team is nearly forgotten now, but it was one of the main stays in the early days, counterpart of the Pony Express, in getting supplies to the country stores and stockmen, and hauling back the wool at shearing time. As the Judith Basin at that time was grow-

ing quite a lot of oats, I used to load back oats for stock men along the Musselshell, which gave me extra revenue.

In the spring of 1889, I joined the Hammond and Gains outfit at Billings and moved to Jefferson Canyon to build railroad grade for the Northern Pacific and taking out riprap rock above Pipestone Springs during the winter. During the late fall, I had a mile and a half of grading on the Harrison Branch.

One evening late, going back to camp after a visit to a neighboring camp along the grade, I passed near a cemetery* and heard a weird noise. I could see something white moving about in the moonlight. I could not keep my course, but made a wide circle around the moving object, feeling sure it was a ghost. The next morning I discovered that my "ghost" was a large piece of white paper on a bush, which flapped and sang in the wind.

In the spring of 1890, I finished up grading at Norris and then moved to Crown Butte ditch on Sun River above Fort Shaw, where I took a contract and worked until fall. I then moved to



Shelby on the Great Northern, which was then building from Havre to the Pacific Coast. I strung my teams out again and went freighting to Midvale, where Glacier Park Hotel now stands.

* During a trip made in the summer of 1939, Mr. Bierman easily located this old cemetery in spite of its being overgrown with grass and brush.



For our Christmas dinner I paid 10c a pound for fresh potatoes and \$1.00 for a St. Maries Lake trout.

We moved to Cut Bank the first of February since that was the end of the track. We were waiting for freight and while there a telegram came for the superintendent of construction. I had a saddle horse and I agreed to deliver the telegram for \$6.00 to Midvale, a day's ride. I made Blackfoot by noon. After leaving Blackfoot it began to snow. The road became drifted and slow going. It got dark and I was still seven miles from Midvale. I got off the road, which made matters worse. The snow got deeper and I could only walk and lead my horse to keep warm. It was a clear moonlight night but cold. I could see the mountains. After traveling for sometime, being on the ridge, I could see some objects below me, so I went down to investigate. It proved to be some hay teams making camp.

"How about staying with you boys for the night?" I asked.

The answer came back, "You have as much right to stay here as we have. There's plenty of feed for your horse, but nothing to eat ourselves."

"I can live on the same grub you can," I told them.

Our supper and breakfast was fried salt pork and tea. I was glad to get in somewhere and by the time I reached Midvale about noon next day I was sure ready to eat. Two brothers not one-half mile from us dug into a snow drift and rolled up in their blankets. In the morning one was frozen dead and the

other's hands and feet were frozen. They were men heading for the mountains looking for work.

About the middle of March, I gathered up my plows and scrapers at the Marias River and headed for Midvale again. I had taken a mile of work there from the river east, and finished it the last of June. From then I worked in a number of different construction camps with my teams, as the Great Northern pushed westward through the mountains to the Flathead.

Bear at Summit

In the summer of 1891, after I had finished my work at Two Medicine, I was working my teams by the day at the camp of a man named Cogle, to help him finish his work. John Kennedy had the contract to furnish beef. He would start at Two Medicine with about 25 head, two men driving the cattle, and one man with a team and wagon. Kennedy had corrals along the way to camp overnight and they could kill as they came to the regular camps. At these stops they left the offal and hides were thrown over brush and poles until the job was finished in the fall.

At Summit was one of these killing places, near the regular road, not far from where I made my camp. These killing places made great places for bear to come at night for the offal, so I decided to try for a bear. I built a scaffold in some lodge pole pines, about 10 feet from the ground and laid some poles that I could coon up on, to reach the scaffold. I stayed in camp until about 8:00 o'clock and then started for the scaffold. As I was about to go, Tomey, one of the teamsters, asked if he could come along.

I agreed, and when we arrived at the place, everything was quiet. I boosted Tomey up the poles, handed him the gun, and started to coon up the poles myself. As I reached for the scaffold, the poles rolled and down I came. At that moment there was a commotion in the brush and tree tops on all sides. I tried to climb a lodge

pole tree and got part way to the scaffold and then slid back to the ground. I called to Tomey to drop the gun. He did, but by that time I could hear that the bear were not coming towards me, but were getting away. I got up on the scaffold and the bear soon returned, but would not come out in the open road. They could smell us. We watched for four nights, with good moonlight, but got no bear.

I took a contract from Cochran and Riley at the end of the long cut at the south end of Columbia Falls. It was finished during the latter part of November. Bringing my outfit from McCarthysville through the mountains was one of the most trying trips I ever made, mud ruts so deep that the axles dragged in places. Where stumps were in the center of the road I would have to build up to get over them. Finally at Bad Rock Canyon, it took all my horses in one string to get one wagon up. When we dropped down and came out in the open level valley, it was a welcome surprise to me. As I now travel over the same ground on an oiled highway for a pleasure trip to Glacier Park and return in one day, with plenty of time to spare, I think back to this first time when it took ten days to make the trip one way.

Early Kalispell

When I first saw Kalispell in September, 1891, it had about a dozen buildings. For the winter I moved my outfit to Smith Valley, where I bought hay and pasture for my stock.

I then set up a restaurant in Kalispell in a building on Second Avenue West, where the Valley House now stands, and shipped in the first oysters and turkeys for Christmas. I did well for a few months until Demersville moved to Kalispell and then there were too many restaurants. Track was laid to Kalispell on January 1, 1892.

There being no work in Kalispell, I moved in May to Ant Flats where there was feed for my horses. This was 50



miles north of Kalispell in the Tobacco Plains area. Tobacco Plains at that time had no post office or school or voting precinct. Kalispell was headquarters. Flathead County was cut from Missoula County in the winter of 1892.

At that time there was only a pack trail from Spring Prairie to Tobacco Plains. I started from Kalispell with two 4-horse teams for Ant Flats. By going ahead with an ax and cutting timber and brush and then following up with the teams, we made Ant Flats in 13 days. Some places we had to let the wagons down with ropes. At Stryker our ropes were not long enough, so we cut fair sized fir trees and fastened them behind the wagon at the top of the hill, with all the branches on to act as brakes.

In the summer of 1893, the county commissioners appointed me road supervisor from Spring Prairie to the Canadian line and I managed to get \$500 to apply on building something of a road. I furnished teams and tools and hired seven men to help. We spent the money and then worked on for four days more to finish some bridges over Graves Creek.

That fall Mrs. Van Wagnen and her children came from Billings, bringing my daughter Ida. I took Ida and Cora, Edith and Joe Van Wagnen to Ant Flats for the winter, while I hauled merchandise for a store Henry Bose started at Tobacco Plains. In the spring of '94 a school was opened at Tobacco Plains

with Mary Harshman, later Mrs. I. D. Ronglin, as teacher. I sent Ida to board with Mrs. Rich and attend school, while the Van Wagnen children went to their mother at Coram where she had the section house boarders.

In the spring of 1895, I went to the Flathead with six horses and plowed east of the river. This gave me about six weeks' work. I then moved back to Ant Flats. Hugh Sinclair went with me. He had just returned from Chicago where he was operated on for cancer of the tongue, having his tongue removed, part of his lower jaw and glands in his neck. This was one early case where an operation cured cancer. He lived to be quite old. We prospected around Stryker, but found nothing of value.

About the last of June we came into Ant Flats for a clean up. A few days later I began to have severe pains about the intestines. They grew worse and I told Hugh to go for help. He got Frank Hardison from Graves Creek to go to Kalispell and see Dr. McDonald. While Hugh was gone, I was alone. The pains got so hard I began to think it was my last. I wrote a short farewell note to Ida, who was then in Kalispell staying with the Geddes family. I began to vomit some awful stuff, the color of liver and ropey, which eased me. I sipped a little water. The pains would come on every few hours and then I would vomit. Dr. McDonald sent out some medicine and by degrees I got back on my feet.

The sick spell left a lump in my side low down which bothered me for several years. It was about the size of a hen's egg. I was later examined by Dr. Duncan who said it was from a ruptured appendix which had walled itself off.

I was able to do some harvest work and in August I took a contract to plow firebreaks from Blackfoot to Havre along the Great Northern Railway and during November I built a log house for

Bose on Flathead Lake near Somers. Then I laid up for the winter at Ant Flats and did some trapping.

The following summer the great panic of 1893 broke loose and there was no work anywhere. I came to the Flathead country in harvest time and worked some horses on binders at 50c a day each and shocked and stacked grain for \$1.00 per day and eats. I furnished my own blankets and slept in the barn, working from daylight to dark. I had to have some money to pay E. S. Geddes for Ida's board and clothes.

In the fall of 1896 I traded some cattle for the improvements on a 160-acre ranch east of Flathead River, where I began farming the next spring. I moved to the ranch in November, taking what cattle I had left—some 18 head—and other stuff and set up housekeeping in the board building where Jessie and Esther were born some years later.

On bringing down my last load of stuff, I realized that the Flathead was getting to be poor hunting ground, so I started to kill my winter's meat where the hunting was good. I started early in the morning and killed two deer and dressed them. As I crossed a ridge a large buck raced up the other ridge. I cut loose and broke a hind leg at the fetlock. After reaching the ridge where he was I saw him standing, rump towards me. I did not care to shoot and spoil so much meat so I tried to get a head shot. Mr. Buck saw me and he started. There being good tracking snow, I followed him all day, killing four more deer, but not catching up with my buck. About sundown I lost his trail on a ridge in open timber where the sun had melted the snow. I always hated to leave a deer wounded, but it was getting dark. When I started down the ridge below the open timber, I jumped my buck again and I turned loose on him with poor results. After following in the direction he ran, I saw him standing a long way off, but I took a chance and fired my

last cartridge. He disappeared. When I got to where he had stood, there were no signs that I had hit him, but I saw him lying downhill about 100 yards looking at me. And I had no cartridge! I got his head between me and a big tree and ran down toward him, thinking I could knock him down with my rifle barrel. He jumped up and started away from me but I was gaining on him. Then he turned with a snort, head down, and charged me. His crown of horns was complete and covered his head, with the result that I could not hit him hard enough with my rifle barrel to knock him down, nor with anything I could pick up. It began to look dangerous for me. The buck was full of fight and it kept me busy dodging him. I was willing to quit, so I started for a small tree which I could get behind, but Mr. Buck was right at my heels. He hit the tree with his horns, which turned his head, showing his nose around the tree, and I began to punch him in the nose with the rifle barrel. That was too much for him and he began to back off. I followed until he went down. At once I grabbed the good hind leg and got out my knife to bleed him, getting over him with his forelegs back of me. As I touched his neck with the knife, up came that good hind leg, catching me in the seat and throwing me over his head with the seat of my pants torn out and a good gash in the flesh. He did not try to get up and on the next try I finished him. I killed two more deer the next day, while packing the seven in. That gave me my winter's meat and also John Sinclair his supply.

Alice Chapman from Warren, Pa., and I were married June 22, 1899, at Angwoods on Fifth Avenue East in Kalispell, across the street from the present Sisters' Hospital. It was a square house which still stands.

Farming was new to me, but I made a go of it and stayed for six years on the farm near Creston. When the land sale came in September, 1902, the land



HENRY AND ALICE CHAPMAN BIERMAN were married June 22, 1899, in Kalispell. A native of Warren, Pa., Mrs. Bierman died in Portland, Ore. in 1949 at the age of 85. Her daughters, Esther Bierman Simon and Dr. Jessie Bierman, compiled and edited their father's autobiographical notes.

was appraised at \$26.00 per acre and improvements at \$1,600. At the sale I did not buy. N. C. Jaquette ran the price up to \$35.00 per acre. Mother was disappointed and so was I.

After taking care of my crop, I moved over to the Leverich place for the winter to feed out my hogs. Mother and the babies went to Jamestown, N. Y. for the winter, while Ida stayed with me, and went to school. I hauled grain.

In the spring of 1903, I bought a half interest in the Kalispell Meat Market and took possession on May 1. Joe Erlich was my partner. A year later I bought him out and went it alone. In 1906 I bought the lot on main street from Gus Garner and built the new market in the fall of 1909, the best one in Kalispell at that time or since, and carried it on until January 30, 1939, when I sold it to Eddy Nordstome and retired.

During World War I, I did a large business and after the war for a few years. One year our total sales amounted to \$200,000, with good profits. But later I lost my shirt in a ranch venture. While I never got very rich in a money sense, I've had a wonderful life—especially in those early days of western freedom and independence.



KALISPELL MEAT MARKET, located since 1906 on Kalispell's Main Street, is pictured here in holiday dress in about 1910. Henry Bierman bought a half interest in the original market in 1903 and a year later bought out his partner. Whenever the National Bison range at Dixon became overstocked, the former buffalo hunter went to the range and shot his own animal, exhibiting it like this as a holiday novelty. Bierman is pictured on the stairway, upper left in the picture.

THE LATER YEARS:

AN EPILOGUE

by Esther Bierman Simon

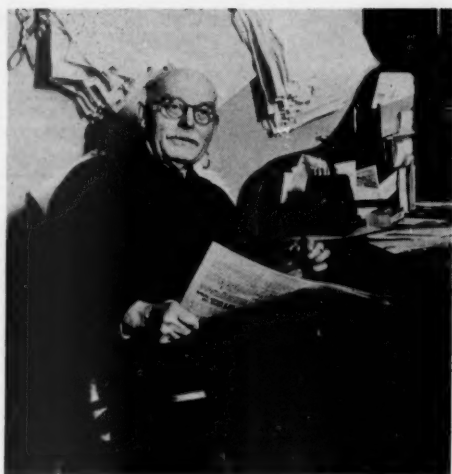
Father was a great story teller, and most of his stories had to do with his early days in Montana. The early years—the romantic, adventurous era—made impressions on his tastes and character which were strong and lasting. It was easy to see these influences in his later life.

During our childhood in Kalispell, the large, privately-owned Conrad herd of buffalo was a high point of local interest. The buffalo were kept in feed yards on the east edge of Kalispell in the winter, where they could be cared for, and taken to hilly, grazing land north of town for the summer. The two "buffalo drives" in fall and spring brought out a good crowd of spectators. Always among them was Father, and

for days afterward he would reminisce about his early buffalo hunting days.

Later the Conrad herd was sold and the National Bison Range established at Moiese, Montana. This, then, became the locale for renewing old memories. Periodically, when the range became overstocked, the herd was thinned by selling some buffalo to the public. On these occasions, Father always shot his own buffalo, then exhibited the hide and head in the market and sold buffalo meat, usually as a holiday novelty.

He loved to hunt and fish, and during our childhood took many long pack trips into the primitive North and South Fork country of the Flathead River. He early instilled in us a love of the outdoors. Often we were taken on fishing trips, and occasionally on pack trips. One of these trips particularly stands out in my memory. My sister Jessie and I were home from college for the summer and, with the added pleading



HENRY BIERMAN sits in his office above his meat market in Kalispell, still enjoying an active life outdoors, eagerly learning new skills and reminiscing about his adventures as a buffalo hunter, freighter, brick maker and railroad construction worker.

of his 9-year-old grandson, Bob Marsh, Father finally agreed to take us on a pack trip.

He went about planning the food and supplies just as he had in freighting days—the essentials but no frills. I can still recall vividly my alarm at discovering that our food supply for the 10-day trip would consist of a large sack of flour, smaller ones of corn meal and oatmeal, salt, baking powder, a side of bacon, coffee, tea and sugar and a few raisins. There were a few dried beans, onions and potatoes, with canned goods strictly limited to sweetened condensed milk. It was confidently planned that this fare would be rounded out by fish and wild berries. There were to be no soft concessions, either to Bob's tender age or to our femininity.

Other supplies were correspondingly Spartan: blankets, tarps, a folding reflector wire grate, two frying pans, a couple of 10-pound lard pails for kettles and water carrying, jack knives, tin plates, cups, forks and spoons. It seemed very little as we set out from Echo Lake Ranger station for the top of the Mission Range and the headwaters of Swan River. We had two pack horses and only two saddle horses. We were to take turns riding. However, the ease with which Father had packed the horses and with unerring memory applied the diamond hitches which held

the packs in place reassured us we were in good hands.

To my constant surprise, being a somewhat stuffy Home Economics major, the food proved to be wonderful. Bread was made each night in the form of bannock and baked on the reflector stove by the campfire. The method was simplicity itself. The sack of flour was set firmly on a level spot, opened, and a bowl-like depression formed in the packed flour. Then the desired amount of flour for the bannock was fluffed into the center of the depression, salt and baking powder added, and then water was slowly worked in by hand to form a biscuit-like dough. Portions were pinched off, flattened, laid on the pan of the reflector, already heating at the side of the campfire, and baked. When properly done, the remaining flour in the sack was clean, dry and with no lumps left to be encountered in the next mixing.

Enough bannock was made to provide left-overs for the next day's pocket lunch. These were split and put together with Father's dry-cured bacon at breakfast time—a simple but rib-sticking meal for an all day fisherman.

All but the first night out, we had all the fish we could eat, either rolled in corn meal and crisp-fried in bacon fat, or made into a savory stew with potatoes, onions and spices.

Coffee and tea were at once creamed and sweetened with a spoonful of Eagle Brand. Oatmeal, cooked with a handful of raisins, also tasted wonderful for breakfast, as did the excellent flapjacks which were turned out from a combination of white flour, cornmeal, baking powder and bacon fat. I tried my hand at flipping the pan-sized cakes, in true camp-cook fashion, but never approached Father's skill. Both pan cakes



HENRY BIERMAN is pictured here at the time of his retirement in 1939, when he was nearing 80 years old. Before his death four years later, he crammed a great many new interests, including a fabulous vegetable garden at his small ranch near Kalispell, along with his old standbys: fishing the hard way by wading in icy streams, and going elk hunting with never a complaint at the discomforts.

and bannock were "smoothed," in Father's term, with caramelized sugar syrup or wild berry larup, made on the spot from huckleberries, chokecherries or service berries, gathered along the trail. And bacon fat pan-gravy, poured over bannock, substituted for potatoes.

In the summer of 1923, I came home after an absence of two years at college. As we sat talking the first evening, he suggested a fishing trip, so we cut short our visiting, went to bed early, and were on our way at dawn the next morning for the 50-mile drive to the end of the South Fork road. We were on the trail, hiking, well before 8 o'clock. It was a beautiful morning and the fresh mountain air and gently climbing hill trail seemed to give wings to our feet. We resumed last evening's conversation about events of the intervening two years and our absorption made us oblivious of time—and distance, until a Forest Service trail sign gave us the startling information that we had hiked 11 miles!

The spot at which we had intended to leave the trail and go down to the river to fish was miles behind us. We decided that the fishing might be even better at this less accessible place, so we scrambled through heavy brush

down to the river and spent the next two to three hours fishing. However, the knowledge that we had a long hike back to the car cut the fishing time short and by mid-afternoon we left the river.

Long before we arrived at the car, my lack of condition and less sturdy spirit had set my steps dragging, in spite of the down grade — and my tongue wagging with complaints of fatigue and discomforts. But not so Father. As usual he accepted the inevitable without complaint or unhappy comment. When we reached the car, he sat down on the river bank, pulled off his shoe packs and, to my amazement, tossed them into the river, with the quiet comment that they would never cause him any more trouble. On questioning, he explained that he had put on an old pair of boots in the morning, not realizing until we were on the trail that they were too short. They had been used for wading on a previous trip and had become dry and shrunken. The 11 miles on the slight upgrade in the morning had not bothered too much, but the return trip down hill had been *agony*—my word, not his. At Christmas time the following winter he wrote that his most appreciated Christmas present was his new big toe nails, just grown out after losing them from this ordeal!

Characteristically, Father waited until he was nearly 80 years old to retire from his business in Kalispell. He began to talk about retiring at 75. He wanted more time to hunt and fish—to be near his beloved mountains and streams. But circumstances did not combine to make it possible until 1939.

Memories crowd my mind of all he compressed into those few remaining years. He grew a magnificent vegetable

garden in a carefully selected section of a feed lot at the "little ranch" a mile and a half south of Kalispell, where the soil was phenomenally rich. Results were astounding and satisfying. He improved the irrigation system at this ranch and took great pride in making three cuttings of alfalfa hay in the short Flathead valley summer. He played pinochle with old friends and sat long hours in his room, writing his reminiscences, although he had never before known the hard discipline of writing.

He went fishing—the "hard way" by wading the streams and rivers, and the "easy way" by boat on Flathead Lake. And he went elk hunting. This story he would surely have called "My Last Hunt." It was the fall of 1940, I believe, when he and one of his "cronies" joined a group of younger men going into the area at the head of the South Fork. The party packed in from the end of the road, 6 miles by horseback, in a mixed rain and snow storm. In spite of his age and poor vision, Father's "know-how" served him well for he got his elk. That winter he made cribbage boards, which we still use, from the horns of this elk, shot on his last hunt when he was 80 years old!

As Father approached his 83rd birthday in the fall of 1942, he was still fiercely independent, physically and mentally. He was making plans for a reunion in Ohio with his brothers. Early in December when it was decided to

postpone the trip until February, in order to escape the holiday travel rush, we urged Mother and him to come to Portland for Christmas. Father was reluctant to leave Kalispell and his pinochle-playing friends. And besides he was absorbed in a new hobby: bread baking! He assured us that he would keep busy until time for the trip east



in February, but he insisted that Mother come to Portland to escape as much cold winter weather as possible.

Father was rarely ill, so it was almost with a feeling of disbelief that we learned, just after Christmas, that he was in the hospital. He had not mentioned being sick. By the time I reached Kalispell, he was already back home recovering from an emergency operation. He had been "patched up," he said. But the doctor said he would need more surgery, and we decided to take him to Portland where he entered a hospital. After major surgery he died on January 23, 1943, three days before his 83rd birthday.

Mother shared her remaining years with Jessie in California and with me in Portland. After several years of failing health, she died in Portland on April 6, 1949, at the age of 85.



Reader's



Remuda

A Roundup of the new western books

Edited by Robert G. Athearn

(CARL UBBELOHDE, Guest Editor)

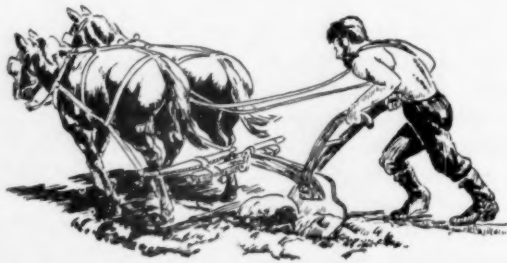
"FORTY YEARS AMONG THE INDIANS: A TRUE YET THRILLING NARRATIVE OF THE AUTHOR'S EXPERIENCE AMONG THE NATIVES," by Daniel W. Jones. [Volume XIX of the Great West and Indian Series]. (Westernlore Press, Los Angeles, 1960. 378 pp., \$8.50). This review is by Norman F. Furniss, chairman of the Department of History at Colorado State University and author of the recently published *The Mormon Conflict*. [See review, page 63.]

Daniel W. Jones, a convert to Mormonism in the early 1850s, spent much of his life in the service of his Church. He did heroic work in the rescue of the unfortunate handcart companies in the cruel winter of 1856-1857; he tried with some success to keep the Utah Indians at peace; he established a Mormon settlement in Arizona; and he made two trips to Mexico in efforts to preach the gospel and to discover a place for future colonization. Throughout these labors, which were less exciting than those of Hercules, perhaps, but at times almost as demanding, he proved himself a hardy, resourceful, and uncomplaining pioneer. Often unrewarded by the leaders of his Church, even maligned (if we may believe his story) by some of its members, he still retained a cheerful devotion to his faith.

Dan Jones is now remembered principally as a friend of the Indians. His philosophy, he tells us in this narrative, was that "every man, even the worst, has something good about him, if properly treated." Whether dealing with the Indians of Utah or with the dreaded Apache, he was true to this homily, displaying a sympathy and an understanding which was more rare among the white men of his day. The book's value lies in these pages.

The book, long out of date but now republished, does have weaknesses, in particular its failure at times to hold the reader's attention. There are exciting parts, it is true, among them the initial narrative describing an Indian attack. Jones's accounts of his escapes from death during the handcart troubles and, later, while on a winter trip to an Indian agency are equally dramatic. The author's style, forceful yet simple, heightens the interest. But among these passages are others of a dreary nature, stories of petty squabbles with his neighbors, of his missionary work, of northern Mexico's attractiveness as a place for settlement.

One wishes that Dan Jones had dwelt longer upon some of the important events that touched his life. He arouses our curiosity by allusion to the Reformation in the Mormon Church, the abortive Y. X. Carrying Company, the "Mormon War" and its accompanying Move South, but he adds nothing to our knowledge of these happenings. Perhaps a charitable desire not to stir up old controversies silenced him; perhaps he was unable to remember details, since he was writing long after these occurrences and without benefit of a diary. Whatever the cause, it is a pity that his "true yet thrilling narrative" fails us as a source of information about this critical period in the history of the Mormon Church.

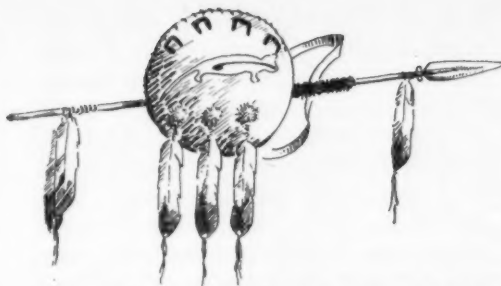


"FOLLOWING THE INDIAN WARS: THE STORY OF THE NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS AMONG THE INDIAN CAMPAIGNERS," by Oliver Knight. (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1960. 345 pp., maps, ill., \$5.95). Howard R. Lamar, who reviews this book, is Associate Professor of History at Yale University and the author of *Dakota Territory 1861-1889*, published in 1956.

Oliver Knight, author of "Fort Worth: Outpost on the Trinity," (1952), has combined his talents as an ex-newspaperman and as a scholar to tell the story of some twenty reporters who covered various major Indian outbreaks between 1866 and 1891. The book is aptly titled, for it is a history of those correspondents and their Indian war copy rather than a general or definitive history of the "Western war," Knight's phrase for the 1,065 battles and skirmishes between Indians and whites which occurred intermittently from 1866 down to the battle of Wounded Knee.

After an excellent introductory chapter on the unique character of Indian wars and the administrative structure of the "Old Army" which had to fight them, the author turns to the reporters and the campaigns as seen through their own eyes. The reader follows three interwoven stories at one time: a biographical sketch of the correspondent, excerpts from his articles, and a general history of the particular "war." While this device provides a "you are there" atmosphere with the author acting as historical commentator, it is at times highly confusing. If one is interested in the campaign, for example, this approach has serious weaknesses since some newsmen only joined an Indian expedition after it was in the field and left before it ended. Or many first-hand accounts, after being given in great daily detail, are suddenly cut off in mid-narrative to be followed by a summary. Many newsmen also padded their copy with highly personal, tedious complaints about the horse they were riding, the bad food, or engaged in exaggerated self-pity over their dangerous plight.

Nevertheless, through Joe Wasson, a reporter for the "Owyhee Avalanche" (Silver City, Idaho), one gets a good picture of General Crook's campaign against Indian hostiles in the Oregon-Idaho-California area in 1867. But when Henry M. Stanley, later of "Dr. Livingstone, I presume fame," covers General Winfield Scott



Hancock's large-scale expedition against the Southern Plains Indians that same year, the reporting is spotty. A second New York "Herald" man—the paper which most consistently sent reporters to follow the Indian wars—DeBenneville Randolph Keim, carried on where Stanley left off and eventually reported Custer's battle on the Washita. Many smaller campaigns are not covered simply because there were no on-the-scene reporters there.

Mr. Knight's device works at its best in covering the Modoc War of 1872—in which "Captain Jack" outwitted the army and General E. R. S. Canby lost his life—and in the famous Sioux Uprising of 1876 in which Custer and his men were annihilated. Actually some two-thirds of the book is devoted to these two wars, for in each of these campaigns a half-dozen or more reporters accompanied the expeditions. Among those newshawks who made names for themselves were Robert D. Bogart, Edward Fox, John F. Finerty, James J. O'Kelly, "Phocion" Howard, Robert E. Strahorn, and Reuben B. Davenport.

While the reporters proved to be honest and reliable, they were unlike the professional correspondents of the Civil and Spanish-American Wars and produced no fine writing. Because of the peculiar character of frontier fighting, however, they did suffer all the privations experienced by the troops, often fought at their side, and occasionally went through heroic efforts to get their story on the wires first. Their stories are the more valuable because they were under no censorship, voiced their opinions freely, and at times damned a commanding officer or denounced the strategy. What emerges in "Following the Indian Wars," then, is intimate, sometimes fascinating detail which will be of use to the future full-scale historian of the "Western War." For it was that unique and tragic war and not the reporters and their careers which continually stole the scene in Mr. Knight's book.

The volume is handsomely bound and printed and is illustrated by maps and photographs.

"SON OF THE GAMBLIN' MAN," by Mari Sandoz. (Clarkson N. Potter, Inc. New York, 1960. 333 pp., \$5.00). Reviewing this new Sandoz volume is Steve Frazee, who characterizes himself as former miner, construction superintendent, newspaperman and, for fifteen years, author of outdoor-adventure, mysteries, Westerns, and non-fiction. His latest work is *First Through the Grand Canyon*, an account of the Powell expedition.

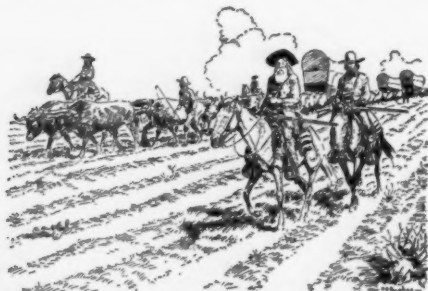
John Jackson Cozad had a seeded rating among faro slickers and sometimes made as much as \$50,000 in a summer session of play, but he was burning inside to found a community where gambling, as well as other assorted evils, would be barred.

In the Platte Valley of Nebraska he bought 40,000 acres near the 100th meridian. Aided by the Union Pacific railroad, he worked savagely to realize his dream. He was a proud and haughty man who did not understand the people whom he settled on the prairies around Cozad. Even as he supported them through drought and grasshopper depressions, the high paternalism of his economy was working to make the settlers and townsmen hate him.

The cowmen who controlled the county seat of Plum Creek already hated him, of course, but in the end it was not they who defeated him, but his own unsympathetic nature. In self-defense he killed one of his own people, and had to run for it, to change his name, to abandon the project.

The book is richly full of the details of Nebraska prairie life, naturally. Robert Henri, the second son, for whom the work is titled, emerges rather abruptly as an artist at the end of affairs. More of him during his young years, while he was fighting his father's battles on the prairie, would have relieved some of the narrative flatness of the story.

As a gambling man, John Cozad had it; as a community builder he does not make much of an echo in the hollowness of time.



"TULAROSA: LAST OF THE FRONTIER WEST," by C. L. Sonnichsen. (Devin-Adair Co., New York, 1960. 336 pp., \$6.00.) David H. Stratton, who reviews this book, is a history professor at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, whose interest in the New Mexico region results partially from his own research and writing about Albert B. Fall.

Seemingly the arid Tularosa Basin of southern New Mexico with its two natural desert scars, the glistening White Sands to the south and the ash-black "Malpais" (a couple of ancient lava flows) to the north, would be one of the least alluring places on earth. But from the "invasion" by the Texas cattlemen in the years after the Civil War until the explosion of the first atomic bomb, when a third scar was added to the stark terrain, there has been heated contention for this area. First, the invading Tejano cattlemen fought it out with the native Spanish-Americans and pioneer Yankee ranchers for control of the sparse grasslands, and then, in our own day, the Pentagon has pushed out the Tejanos and their descendants to make room for nuclear testing areas and rocketry ranges.

The author, a transplanted midwesterner with a couple of Harvard degrees, came to El Paso (an unredeemed part of New Mexico) thirty years ago to teach literature in Texas Western College, where he is now dean of the graduate school. He writes of the Southwest's grim sun-scorched beauty, which by moonlight becomes "an austere corner of fairyland," with a fervor and understanding seldom displayed by an adopted son. Seventeen years of intermittent writing and investigation were devoted to this book. Actually, he might have published it sooner but for the necessity of making several revisions to avoid possible libel suits instigated by anxious children and grandchildren who want to be sure that only the family version of their forebearers' shooting scrapes appear in print. And, who knows, they may have had six-shooter justice in mind, being sons of their fathers!

Despite these pressures and other difficulties, Dr. Sonnichsen has written a book which will delight the Wild West buff and impress the professional enthusiast as well. This is mainly a literary approach to historical happenings, but it is not bad history, to be sure. The style is racy when compared with the more scholarly move-

ment of Sonnichsen's recent book on the Mescalero Apaches. Some of the details are not honed to exactness, perhaps because there is such a heavy reliance on interviews with oldtimers, whose memories are too often blurred by time and illusions of self-importance. But for biographical information on New Mexico greats such as Oliver Lee, Albert J. Fountain, Albert B. Fall, Eugene Manlove Rhodes, and Pat Garrett, this book is a good place to start. The account of the gruesome murder of Colonel Fountain and his young son on the White Sands is the best in print, and probably will be for some time to come. The main contribution, however, is the story of the Texas cattlemen's invasion of southern New Mexico and the subsequent bloody adjustments involving not only land control but political and economic dominance as well.

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"THE MORMON CONFLICT," by Norman F. Furniss. (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1960. 311 pp., ill. \$5.00). This review is by LeRoy R. Hafen, professor of history at Brigham Young University at Provo, Utah, and one of the West's most active scholars, writers, and editors. His output of writing and compilations of raw historic material, often in collaboration with his wife, Ann, has been prodigious. The Hafens compiled and edited *Utah Expedition, 1857-58*, an account of the military movement under Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston. For a review of the Hafens' latest book *Handcarts to Zion*, see next page.

The author of this volume devoted extensive research to his subject. The result is the most thorough and satisfactory study we have of the Mormon question, 1850 to 1859. Neither side in the bitter conflict was blameless, and partisan apologists have made rabid arguments against the opposition. In handling questions so controversial the author has generally steered a fair and unbiased course.

Professor Furniss makes a just appraisal of the Administration when he writes that President Buchanan "found himself in the embarrassing position of sending the army in 1857 and a peace commission in 1858, instead of performing these actions in a reverse order . . . a little hesitancy before the start of the Utah War would have spared him a good deal of discomfiture."

The author effectively refutes the off-repeated statement that the sending of the troops to Utah was Secretary Floyd's nefarious scheme to scatter the nation's forces and thus aid the South; and that the expedition was a "contractor's war", instituted by big freighting firms. He also makes a point in giving as one of the causes of hostility to the Mormons the large number of foreign emigrants among them; and the current American fear or hatred of aliens, as exhibited in the Know Nothing Party of the period. He appraises the Mormons' inadequacy of military supplies to fight a war and correctly describes their change in strategy during the winter of 1857-58 from defense to retreat.

There are instances where the author's impartiality or judgment might be questioned. The reviewer would agree with the author's statement that Judge W. W. Drummond "more than any other man brought about the Mormon War of 1857-58," but would not agree that the "Americans of the 1850's demanded a military campaign to oust him [Brigham Young] from his position of political power" (p. 18). In the book and in events of the time there is not proof of a general demand for the military campaign against the Mormons in 1857; Buchanan almost secretly ordered the military action, and the troop movement came largely as a surprise to the nation as a whole.

The author does not show a full appreciation of the importance of the Brigham Young Express and Carrying Co., with its plans for way stations and other facilities for aiding Mormon emigration and communication; but simply refers to it as "the opportunity to inspect all official correspondence concerning the Territory."

Issue can well be taken with the author's judgment that Governor Cumming "failed to promote the cause of peace in Utah" (p. 164). In reality it was he, more than any other official, who by his moderation, fairness, and desire for peace, effected a solution of the conflict without its terminating in a bloody tragedy. Ultimately, Furniss admits that Cumming was "Buchanan's most fortunate appointment."

The Bibliographical Essay is a frank, comprehensive, and generally excellent discussion of sources, but with appraisals sometimes unduly sharp and with a flavor of omnipotence.

The book ends on a false note, with an absurd and scurrilous quotation from a magazine of 1911: "Every Mormon from his cradle days is taught to look upon this nation as the arch-enemy."

"HANDCARTS TO ZION, 1856-1860," by LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen. (A. H. Clark Co., Glendale, 1960. 328 pp., ill., map. \$9.50). This review, reprinted from the *Omaha World-Herald*, is by Merrill J. Mattes of Omaha, distinguished regional historian for the National Park Service.

On August 3, 1856, just beyond Loup Fork an Irish convert to Mormonism wrote: "Started at 5 o'clock without any breakfast and had to pull the carts through six miles of heavy sand . . . I was so weak from thirst and hunger and exhausted with the pain of the boils [on his jaw and leg] that I fell down several times . . . Poor Kate, crawling on her hands and knees, and the children crying with hunger and fatigue . . . About 12 o'clock a thunder storm came on . . . In our tent we were up to our knees in water . . ."

Ephraim Hanks, who helped rescue a party caught in a blizzard, remembered: "Many lost their limbs, in whole or in part. Many I washed . . . until the frozen parts would fall off, after which I would sever the shreds of flesh with my scissors . . ."

The original journals and reminiscences uncovered by the Hafens reveal the entire catalog of human misery encountered in the notorious handcart expeditions—death by drowning or rattlesnakes, getting run over by cart and wagon wheels, starving to death, freezing to death, but mainly just expiring from sheer exhaustion. In the fourth and fifth expeditions of 1856 over 200 died, largely from winter storms, while an equal number soon died after reaching Utah or were maimed and scarred for life.

Of course there was unquestioned heroism, of the type which all such desperate human situations breed, but the general pall of sorrow and suffering was such that a TV producer of today would hesitate to

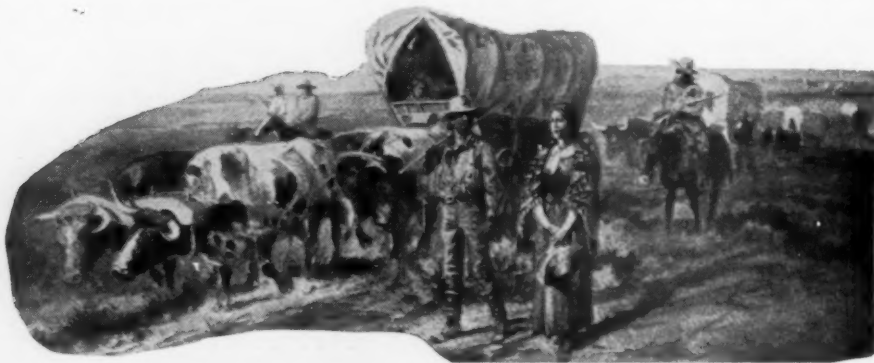
touch it. One thinks more in terms of Dante's purgatory or the tribulations of the Old Testament. What was the agony all about?

Three things explain the tragedy of the handcarts—the religious zeal of the Mormons, anxious to populate their new Zion by a cheap method of transportation; the anxiety of people in England, Ireland, and Wales to escape their poverty; the unrealistic optimism of the "Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company" as to the limits of human endurance.

The doomed Saints traveled by dingy steamers from Liverpool, by trains from New York to Iowa City. Here the two-wheeled carts ("flimsy Yankee hickory structures") were built from scratch and trundled across Iowa, then by ferry to Florence or North Omaha, where more hasty graves were added to the big Mormon cemetery filled with the dead of 1846-1847. Whenever someone died (children and "old veterans of Waterloo" were the earliest victims), it helped to relieve the drain on skimpy rations; but soon out on the Plains there were no trees from which to make coffins.

The grave of one handcart martyr, Rebecca Winters, is a notable feature of the landscape near Scottsbluff. The most poignant monument, perhaps, is the memorial at Martin's Cover beyond Devil's Gate, Wyoming, where hundreds died "in the claws of a cruel winter." Yet it is a remarkable fact that there survives "a half million offspring" of handcart survivors who "proudly cherish their unique heritage."

Dr. Hafen's mother traveled with the carts at age 6 in 1860. It is a tribute to his scholarship that he writes objectively, not vibrating with unseemly editorial emotion, letting the harrowing facts speak for themselves. It would take a Cecil B. DeMille to convey pictorially the hardships and horror of this strange Western epic.



"RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY TEXAS," by John Holland Jenkins, edited by John Holmes Jenkins III. (University of Texas Press, Austin, 1958. \$5.00). This review is by Noel M. Loomis of Descanso, Calif., author of *The Texan-Santa Fe Pioneers*, published in 1958, and winner that year of the Western Writers of America Silver Spur for the best western novel of 1958.

It was 1828, and John Holland Jenkins was only six or seven years old, when his family migrated to Texas (which was a part of the Mexican Republic), and settled in the vicinity of Bastrop, which is in southeast Texas, on the Colorado River below what is now Austin. Texas then was essentially a wilderness at the mercy of Lipan, Comanche, Kiowa, Waco, and Caddo Indians, and Jenkins says that 35 miles from Bastrop, "we found human bones lying 'grim and ghastly on the green grass.'" If it was an omen, it was an accurate one.

They had no houses, wagons, milk, or nails, but Jenkins says "it is surprising how much can be done when bone, sinew, and muscle are used with a will upon any material." It must have been typical of most of those early families. It would appear, however, that their worst obstacle was the Comanche Indians, for Holland's memoirs, no matter how they try, can never get very far away from the Indian fights, atrocities, massacres, scalplings, revenge parties; husbands and fathers were killed, scalped, mutilated—often literally in the flash of an eye—for the Comanches usually struck fast and mercilessly. Mothers and children were carried away; the children often had their brains dashed out against a tree; the women were kept as Comanche possessions, and some eventually were elevated to the status of wives of Comanche warriors.

This is a very good book, well and capably edited. The footnotes are plentiful but not overdone, and are concisely informative. The editor seems to have left the manuscript in its original form, and used

footnotes to handle discrepancies, which in most cases are minor. All in all, the narrative has the ring of truth.

The "Biographical Notes," a compilation of biographical material on many persons named in the narrative, are an excellent device, and are well handled and informative. The bibliography is impressive, and appears to have been used; full and complete citations are given. The index is adequate except for subject headings, which are not given.

There is some interesting material on the fighting with the Mexicans during the revolution in 1836, and later concerning the Texan-Santa Fe Expedition of 1841 and the actions along the Rio Grande in 1842, but it would seem the greater value would lie in the picture given of frontier conditions in Texas from 1828 to 1846—in which latter year the indefatigable Comanches were still killing citizens in the vicinity of Austin. If there are yet those who think the early-day Comanches were noble redmen, they would do well to read this book. It was dog eat dog; the Comanches gave no quarter and expected none; they fought the way they had always fought—to win; if a man closed his eyes, he was likely to wake up without a scalp—and some did.

Taken all the way around, this is an interesting and worthwhile book for those whose attention is directed toward the Republic of Texas.

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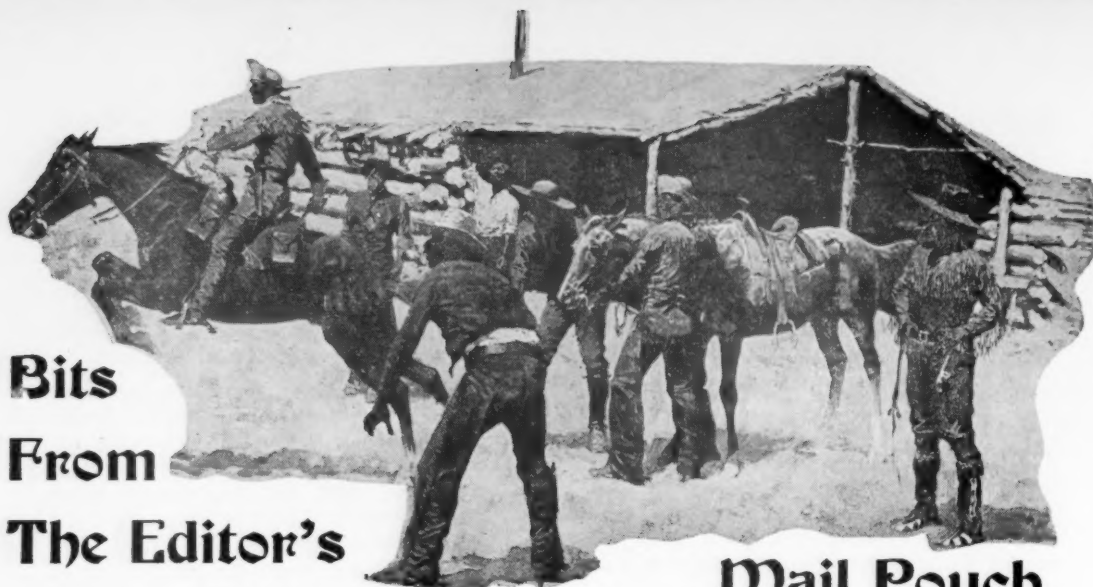
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Bits From The Editor's



Mail Pouch

O. C. SELTZER ART

"I note in your article on [Olaf C.] Seltzer [Summer 1960] that the posse chased the Curry boys into the badlands. About 1919 I worked with a Frenchman, Pete Dauphnia, and he told me he was in Culbertson on July 1st, 1901, when a special train came through consisting of a stock car and a coach or two and anybody who cared to load his horse aboard could join the posse. He said free grub and a train ride sounded good, so he went along, picking up men and horses at every stop. Arriving at the scene which, he claimed, was Wagner station near Malta, a 60-man crew was on hand. The sheriff took 20 men, one deputy took another 20 and Pete went with the third group.

"He said they rode for perhaps 15 miles when they came upon a nice flat rock which became a card table for a day or so. Upon returning to the railway, nothing was said about the game but it was presumed the other two outfits did about the same.

"Tommy Jones was the engineer and the Currys tried to take his watch but he talked them out of it, as he knew the hold-up men well. The above was all told me by Pete Dauphnia and agreed upon by one Red Wettlin of Brockton, Mont.

"About 1923 or 4 I was on a Great Northern train going to Glasgow. An old long-whiskered character sat up front. The conductor came to the character, looked at his ticket, and came on to me and my companion whom he knew. The conductor asked us if we knew who the bewhiskered gent was, which we didn't. He told us that the ticket was from Kentucky and that he had known Kid Curry years before and that he would swear it was the kid. Also the character was going to visit some folks along the Missouri which were either old friends or relatives of Curry's. I have often read of the posse chasing the Currys and I never met anyone else who claimed to have served in the posse, so I don't know if old Pete was romancing or not. But it sounded quite possible.

"Red Wettlin was the son of a French army officer who lived in Terrytown, N. Y. where Red was born. His father moved back to France in time to serve in the Franco-Prussian War. Red was a water boy for crippled soldiers on the battlefields. At 18 or so he was back in the U.S.A. and in the army serving at Fort Buford. He raised a field of corn and sold \$1200 worth to steamboats. Deciding to go back to France, he took the money and got passage to Fort Lincoln, where he was promptly 'rolled'. So he returned to duty, married an Indian girl, and homesteaded land where the west half of Williston, N. D. is now.

"I note some people demand more Russell articles and pictures. I think I'd like to see a few of other artists' work sort of sprinkled through the magazine. We realize Russell was the master, but the other boys weren't so far behind."

Fred C. Collins
Columbia Falls, Mont.

"... My reason for writing is to convey appreciation of your terrific article on Olaf Seltzer (July, 1960) ... I guess my ignorance of Montana history is nothing less than colossal. I had never heard of him. However, I think the explanation lies in the fact that I shook the dust of Montana from my feet in 1920. Your article was an education. I was pleased to learn that [Seltzer] had been a friend of Charley Russell, a protege of his ... The real feeling that I get is one of regret, of disgust with myself, for not having realized the opportunity I had in Montana days of getting to know those great characters, the people who made the history you are now writing ..."

P. E. (Pat) Burke
1927 Harvard
North Las Vegas, Nev.

"... It would be hard to fully tell how much we really enjoyed the July issue of MONTANA, especially the story of O. C. Seltzer. I'm sure many people such as we knew so little of him that he was completely hidden—and so justly deserves a place in the sun, even at this late date. One could well believe they were looking at Russell's work. Thanks for giving us this man's story."

Ike and Clara Blasingame
Avenal, Calif.

FLANNERY, NOT FLAHERTY!

"The kind words concerning the John Hunton Diaries in the Autumn issue of MONTANA are much appreciated. ... They were immediately effective, too. A few days after the magazine came out I received my first order from a new dealer in Sheridan, Wyoming. And I know the order resulted from the review because it was addressed to Pat 'Flaherty' ..."

L. G. "Pat" Flannery
Fort Laramie, Wyo.

In our Autumn 1960 issue, we inadvertently confused two good Gaelic names, "Flannery" and "Flaherty". In reviewing Pat Flannery's latest privately printed gem under an informal review: "Some New Offerings Worthy of Mention."

RUSSELL: PRO AND CON

"Enclosed find my check for *Free Grass to Fences, Whoop-Up Country*, and an extra copy of the Summer 1960 issue of *Montana*. The two books sound good . . .

The Summer issue of *Montana* should once and for all get those 'off your back' who have complained about too much Russell and no one else. Yours is a fine job on O. C. Seltzer and a real credit to a talented artist. Between yourself, James Forrest and Dick Flood, you did an admirable job in spelling out the similarities and differences between Seltzer and Russell. Seltzer's comments on his friend and competitor, Russell, were also interesting insights into C.M.R.'s late works . . .

"After seeing a number of the fine miniature Seltzer oils down at Gilcrease a couple of weeks ago while on vacation I can readily understand your point about his being a stickler for detail. On the four Seltzer water colors which I have the same is very apparent particularly in the case of the early one . . .

"Again many thanks for the good reading in the current issue of *Montana* — it's a real collector's item . . . And continued success to you and your able staff."

William C. Decker
1778 Irving Ave. So.
Minneapolis 5, Minn.

* * *

"Some readers jumped all over Margot Liberty for saying she was tired of Charlie Russell pictures in the magazine (Spring, 1960).

"Take heed. I am on Mrs. Liberty's side. A lot of the Cheyennes on the Tongue River Reservation, where she lives, would be on her side too (never mind the topic of the argument) if they knew somebody was growling at her.

"Anybody want to take on the Northern Cheyennes? Anybody want to tangle with Princess Kills-Both-Places of the Blackfeet, who is me? I am tired of Charlie Russell pictures on the magazine, so there."

Dorothy M. Johnson
West Rattlesnake Gulch
Missoula, Montana

* * *

DUDE RANCHING

"The fruits of labor, beginning with the letter you wrote to us on April 20 requesting information on the dude ranching industry, handsomely paid off with this beautiful summer 1960 issue of *Montana*. I know that you put in many long, hard hours of careful research in planning and in producing the story written by L. W. (Gay) Randall.

"The reproductions of the photographs, together with their captions as well as the content of this story, are in excellent taste. They are also well planned and well laid out.

"Therefore, please consider this letter as a note of congratulations on a very well-done story in what most westerners consider the outstanding magazine of Western history in the United States."

Bill Bragg, Jr.
Dude Ranchers' Assn.
Billings, Montana



FRONTIER PORTRAITS

"Our reaction to your article, the excellent color reproductions, and the brief biographies were all we could wish it to be: a feeling of pride and appreciation for the way Lea's work was presented (Summer, 1960).

"This would have been a moment of pride and satisfaction for Lea, too. He felt renewed inspiration whenever others understood what he was trying to put down in pigment on those 'acres of white canvas'. With such great effort a man interprets his love and feeling in paint. Your article was, indeed, a tribute to my husband . . .

"On behalf of Lea's family as well as my sons and myself, may I simply say, thank you!"

Mrs. Dale (Lea F.) McCarty
305 Jean Drive
Santa Rosa, Calif.

* * *

" . . . I think the Battle of Lightning Creek [Summer 1960] is splendidly done and we all want to thank you so much for everything. I think the Summer issue is very fine throughout [including] your article on Artist Lea Franklin McCarty. I will look at the paintings at Knott's Berry Farm with far more pleasure next time I am by there . . ."

Mary Richardson
814 Arcadia Ave., Apt. 5
Arcadia, Calif.

* * *

MORE ON BOOK DEALERS

"I feel I must vigorously back both the Archer House and Robert G. Athearn in their statements made in the Summer 1960, *MONTANA* and also the letters [of] reply in the Fall, 1960 issue, to the book dealers protest on the charge that some had hiked prices out of all reason.

"Having ranched and engaged in other work the first 73 years of my life, I don't hold myself up as too high an authority on authorship, publishing and selling of books but have done all three jobs the last four years. See the Historical Society of Montana "Books of the West" sales list and their mention of my two books in their column of new offerings, page 77 of Winter 1960 and page 62, Fall 1960 issues. . . .

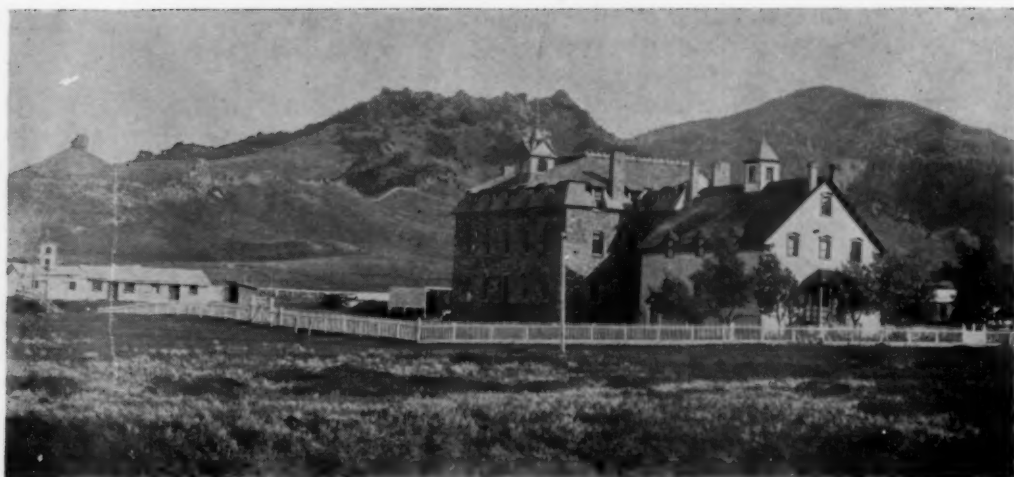
"As soon as I got my first book *Back Trailing* out, I began to receive book catalogues and circulars which to date have listed it at anywhere from \$8.00 to \$16.50 with comments and in some cases with the false information that it is out of print. This has involved only a half dozen book dealers, perhaps out of a much larger number, but it is a half-dozen too much.

"I wrote my books so interested people could read some true, unadulterated historical truths and experiences of the old cow-country West. For some old timers it might be a nostalgic homecoming to days gone by and for others it might cast a new light on a subject which has been either over-glamorized or made too tragic to fit the truth.

"A few months ago I saw an advertisement of a fine, large western book which I had read some 35 years ago. The price asked was about \$95.00. Now it is being reprinted and selling at \$15.00, which is what should be done with all worthwhile, out of print books. At \$95.00 I couldn't touch it, but I may be able to dig up the \$15.00 and the prized book. I am not concerned with whether it is a 'first edition' or not. I want it for its unsurpassed Western cow-country history in which I had some part."

John O. Bye
2743 East 103rd
Seattle 55, Wash.

Historic St. Peter's Mission: Landmark of the Jesuits and the Ursulines Among the Blackfeet



by Wilfred P. Schoenberg, S. J.

APPROXIMATELY 15 miles from Cascade, Montana, which is half-way between Great Falls and Helena on U. S. Highway No. 91, lies historic old St. Peter's Mission. Once a thriving hub from which Jesuit missionaries worked out, like spokes into a wide Montana wheel, the mission now appears to be abandoned, a mere relic of the past, a sobering reminder of a long struggle which was finally lost. An original hewn log church still stands in contrast with the crumbling ruins of more pretentious stone buildings which decay around it; and, if the ruins suggest the irony and fickleness of history, they also glorify what remains.

They say that on warm sunny days there are rattlesnakes in the grass spreading over the ruins. No doubt they are right. It is what you would expect. The snakes have come to claim the stones quarried from the bluffs and mountains surrounding the mission. The Indians and nuns and priests of the mission have long since departed, allowing the grass to spread where once busy feet trod and the snakes to multiply where once multi-storied buildings filled the little valley. Only the path to the church is still open. Worn down with pious regularity by a few Catholic families who worship there, it pre-

sents interesting evidence of living man in a melancholy scene of ruin and decrepitude.

St. Peter's has enjoyed a violent past as well as a thriving one. With its roots in ground jealously guarded by the Blackfeet, "of all tribes the most numerous and most fierce,"¹ with its struggle against poverty, starvation and fires, and its final destruction by the indifference of a government policy, it must not be imagined that its past could be anything except violent. Perhaps if the Indians had not wanted it that way the missionaries would have. There is nothing more glorious for missions

DECADE BONUS SPECIAL . . .

With this first issue of Volume XI, 1961, *MON-TANA the Magazine of Western History* departs from its regular format to bring you a special second decade section beginning on these pages with the scholarly account of historic St. Peter's Mission. On page 86 may be found another utterly new feature for this magazine

. . . a short old West vignette, in this case the story of the famous Justin boot. Via this added section each issue, we will share with our readers some of the many succinct, offbeat and epic facets of Western history which have come to our files complimenting the long-established bill of fare.

and missionaries, in retrospect at least, as opposition. From the historians' point of view the mission's violent history is even more acceptable because it casts over the remains the morbid pall of tragedy, a quality which assures his account of a reading.

The mission's founders could foresee the violence. They came to live among the Blackfeet but a brief time after the tribe had been decimated by smallpox. This fact was not lost on the Jesuits. When the first Jesuit to live among them arrived in the autumn of 1846, he estimated the number of the tribe at "about 1,000 lodges or 10,000 souls. This is not half what they were before the smallpox was introduced among them." And of the whole number, "the women constitute more than two-thirds if not even three-fourths."² At this time the Blackfeet nation comprised three large divisions, having different names but speaking the same



FR. PIERRE JEAN DeSMET, great Jesuit missionary, was painted wearing the decoration of the Knight of the Order of Leopold, presented by King Leopold of Belgium. At the insistence of his family, DeSmet allowed his portrait to be made wearing the distinguished decoration. After that time, nothing more was heard of it, and the indomitable missionary continued his labors in the frontier West. (Historical Society of Montana photo.)

Wilfred P. Schoenberg, S. J., archivist at the Crosby Library, Gonzaga University in Spokane, has made full use of his access to a wealth of original, unpublished documents relating to the religious and secular history of the Northwest and Alaska to become one of the region's busiest historians and writers. Now at work on a chronicle of Catholic history in the Northwest, Father Schoenberg's most notable works are on the Jesuit Mission Presses, and the Jesuits in Oregon and Montana. His books and articles are invariably readable and appeal to the lay reader as well as to the academician.

Son of the late Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Schoenberg, formerly of St. Aloysius Parish in Spokane, Father Schoenberg graduated from Gonzaga High School in 1933 and six years later entered the Jesuit Novitiate at Sheridan, Ore. He taught at his high school alma mater between 1946 and 1948, before he began the study of theology at Alma College in Alma, Calif. He entered the priesthood on June 15, 1951, at St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco.

Father Schoenberg received archival training at the National Archives in 1946 and received the jubilee award from the Northwest Catholic Library Association for cultural contributions to the Pacific Northwest.

language: the "Siksikana" or North Pie-gans who were the Blackfeet proper, the "Pikuni" called South Pie-gans by whites, and the "Kaenna," also called the Bloods. The Siksikana inhabited the high plains along the eastern slope of the Rockies on both sides of the U.S.-Canadian border. When the border line dispute was finally settled, they withdrew to the northern side. Catholic

¹ Father DeSmet, S.J., in manuscript notes regarding the Blackfoot Mission, to Fathers Roothan, S.J., General of the Society of Jesus in Rome. It may be observed that DeSmet's comment was not intended to be complimentary, probably because of Blackfeet hostility toward the Flatheads, his favorites. Later his attitude changed and in his writings subsequent to the Blackfoot-Flathead alliance of 1846 he reserved such sharp remarks for other tribes.

² Quoted by Palladino, L.B., S.J., *Indians and White in the Northwest*, First edition. Baltimore, 1894, p. 172.

missionaries who worked among them were members of the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate of whom the most renowned was Father A. La-combe, O.M.I. The South Pie-gans dwelled exclusively in Montana, a territory which was also occupied by two other tribes, the Gros Ventres and the Assiniboines who were a distant branch of the Dakota or Sioux.³ Sometimes observers on the early frontier spoke erroneously of these two latter tribes as members of the Blackfeet nation. Actually they were inveterate enemies of the Blackfeet and when missionaries first attempted to Christianize either tribe they were caught in tribal wars.

The first Jesuit to meet a Blackfoot was Father DeSmet who had the great pleasure of speaking with several on his first trip to the west in 1840. So far as records can produce evidence, he was also the first to baptize a member of the tribe. In a letter to a comrade-in-arms this very energetic, globe-trotting Black Robe described the long ceremony which cost him, among other things, his Christmas dinner. "There was an old chief of the Blackfeet nation, in the camp, with his son and his little family, five in all, who had been hitherto very assiduous in their attendance at prayers and catechism. The day succeeding my arrival I commenced giving three instructions daily, besides the catechism, which was taught by the other Fathers. They profited so well that, with the grace of God, 115 Flatheads, with three chiefs at their head, thirty Nez Percés with their chief, and the Blackfoot chief and his family, presented themselves at the baptismal font on Christmas day. I began my masses at seven o'clock in the morning; at five o'clock P. M. I still found myself in the chapel."⁴

The baptism was a tangible beginning if an unpredictable one. DeSmet, his zeal for more Christians now greatly aroused, conceived a bold plan for preventing Blackfeet raids on the property and maidens of his cherished Christian

Flatheads. He would convert the Blackfeet (it was as simple as that) and foster an alliance between the two tribes.

In the autumn of 1845 he undertook one of his most adventurous journeys hoping to find the Blackfeet in their high altitude haunts. Though he travelled as far east as Madison Forks on the Missouri, he failed in his purpose and was forced to return to St. Mary's, his head already buzzing with plans for another search. A chance presented itself in autumn of the following year. Compelled to return to St. Louis to arrange for mission supplies, DeSmet boldly chose a course through Blackfeet country which was ordinarily avoided if possible. Father Nicholas Point, S. J., who had accompanied him to the Rocky Mountains in 1841 and who was now somewhat disillusioned in his first enthusiasm, left St. Mary's with DeSmet on August 16th.⁵ They headed directly into Blackfoot territory. After an Indian battle or two and a little more excitement, which one might consider appropriate in view of his objective, DeSmet had the satisfaction of bringing together the chiefs of the two tribes at Fort Lewis on the Missouri river, which was about three miles above and on the opposite bank of its successor fort, called Benton.⁶ He spent four

³ "The Sioux of the Mountains," says Father Palladino, "Assinini, in their tongue, standing for mountains or rocks, and Boines for Sioux." *Ibid.* p. 170.

⁴ This letter is included in Chittenden, Hiram Martin and Alfred Talbot Richardson, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean DeSmet, S.J.*, New York, 1905, Vol. I, p. 338. Ewers states that the first Protestant missionary among the Blackfeet was "the Reverend R. T. Rundle, a Methodist, who worked among the Assiniboine and North Blackfeet for eight years following 1840." cf. Ewers, John C., *The Story of the Blackfeet*, Lawrence Hasbell Institute, 1944, p. 42. The first Protestant missionary among the Pie-gans was the Reverend E. D. Machey, who was sent to Fort Benton in the summer of 1856 by the Presbyterian Church. The Reverend Machey returned East after one month because of the illness of his wife who accompanied him. Also cf. Ewers, John C., *The Blackfeet*, Norman, 1958, p. 194 sq.

⁵ Father Point, in a letter to the Jesuit General in Rome, dated April 14, 1845, requested to be transferred to a new mission in Eastern Canada. The General, answering on February 18, 1846, gave Point the permission he requested, but Point did not receive this letter until spring of the following year. For further details cf. Garraghan, Gilbert J., S.J., *The Jesuits of the Middle United States*, New York, 1938, Vol. II, p. 450 sq.

⁶ Established in May, 1847, Fort Benton was first called Fort Clay. Its name was changed to Benton in 1850 to honor the man who had often rescued the American Fur Company from disaster. cf. Chittenden, Hiram Martin, *Fur Trade of the Far West*, New York, 1903, Vol. III, p. 963, and Father Garraghan's corrections of Chittenden's account. "Nicholas Point, Jesuit Missionary in Montana of the Forties," in Willard and Goodykoontz (eds.), *Trans. Mississippi West*, Boulder (University of Colorado), 1930, p. 51 sq., and *The Jesuits in the Middle United States*, Vol. II, p. 446 sq.



OLD ST. PETER'S CHURCH, with the log cabin nuns' quarters to the right, are shown in this early picture from the Historical Society of Montana archives. Surpliced altar boys are pictured, along with a Jesuit priest in the background. This old log building, reverently preserved and boasting a new bell tower, is all that remains of the mission. More impressive stone buildings once at the site are in ruin.

days at this American Fur Company post and after his departure on September 28th, both tribes smoked and danced far into the night to celebrate their newly-made peace.

DeSmet left more than peace smoke behind him. Father Point, quite reluctant to leave the mountains after all, remained at Fort Lewis to take advantage of the Blackfeet's more favorable dispositions toward Christianity. His winter was not wasted. Having won over the Blackfeet with the magic of his paintings, he was able to baptize 667 of them before his own departure in the following May. Though all but 26 of them involved children, the mission was firmly established in the hearts of the Indians, at least, if not in buildings and debts.⁷

The buildings did not appear for ten troubled years. Jesuits in the interim occasionally visited the Blackfeet at Fort Benton or in their summer camps, and more often families or bands of Blackfeet crossed the Rockies to visit the Jesuits at St. Mary's and St. Ignatius. Father Adrian Hoecken, S. J., founder of the latter, described the arrival of Chief Little Dog in a letter to DeSmet: "Last spring, and during the summer following, we had several

Black-Feet here. They behaved extremely well. Among others, the Little Dog, chief of the Piegans, with some members of his family. They entered our camp with martial music and an innumerable quantity of little bells. The very horses pranced in accordance with the measure, and assumed a stately deportment at the harmony of the national hymn."⁸

Just one month after this letter was written, (May, 1857) an Indian agent, Major Alfred Vaughan, proposed to Father DeSmet that a Catholic mission for the Blackfeet be established on the Judith river. Since Vaughan was not a Catholic, his recommendation carried more than ordinary weight with the Jesuits and DeSmet lost no time in forwarding it to Rome. Two months later Colonel Alexander Cummings, head of

⁷ Jesuit literature of the period abounds with references to the Blackfeet and their conversion. Various reasons are given for their desire for Christian baptism, for example Point's influence over them and the good example of whites at Fort Lewis. The principal reason given by both DeSmet and Point was that the Blackfeet, by nature very superstitious, wanted Christian Baptism as a medicine more powerful than their enemies'. Thus, though many Blackfeet adults pleaded with Point for Baptism, he reluctantly consented to baptize them only after solid assurances their motives were purged of superstition.

⁸ DeSmet, Rev. P. J., S.J., *Western Missions and Missionaries*, New York, 1859, p. 316. Unfortunately this delightful chief Little Dog was killed in June 1866 by younger members of the tribe, according to Deputy Indian Agent Hiram D. Upham, because he was too friendly to the whites. Little Dog and Big Lake, of all Blackfeet chiefs the most friendly to the whites, were both greatly influenced by the Jesuit missionaries. There is no doubt that this influence protected the lives of countless whites during the restless sixties.

St Stanislaus Seminary
Florissant Mo. May 6, 1914

Reverend L. B. Palladino S. J.

Rev. & Dear Father P. C.

About a quarter of
a century ago, I remember you
kindly requested me to furnish you
with some items about the beginnings
of Helena, for your book *Indian and
White in the North West*. Recalling
that similar information about
the pioneer days, will be equally
acceptable to you, I now on my own
initiative, write to your Reverence
concerning St. Peter's Mission among
the Blackfoot Indians.
An error in your book was forcibly
brought to my notice, a few weeks ago.

A facsimile of the first page of Father Francis Xavier Kuppens' history of St. Peter's Mission, the original of which is preserved in the Oregon Province Archives of the Society of Jesus, is reproduced here. Written in 1914, Father Kuppens' history was dedicated principally to correct certain errors made in the first edition of Father Palladino's "Indian and White in the Northwest."

the Western Superintendency of Indian Affairs, one time companion of Isaac Stevens in his treaty-making and more lately Governor of Colorado territory, made a similar proposal to Father DeSmet, adding waggishly that Jesuits were his favorite missionaries. If he had baited a hook, DeSmet swallowed it. Writing to the Jesuit General in Rome he repeated the Colonel's remarks and urged compliance. Rome, reputedly slow to move, took action immediately. By the spring of 1859 Father Nicholas Congiato, S. J., Superior of the Rocky Mountain missions, dispatched Father Hoecken with orders to select a mission site.

After he arrived among the Blackfeet in April, Father Hoecken spent the summer months travelling extensively with the tribe, always alert to the advantages of a mission on any site visited. He finally selected a spot on the Teton river, "just close to where the town of Choteau is to-day [sic] and the Butte, but a short distance off,

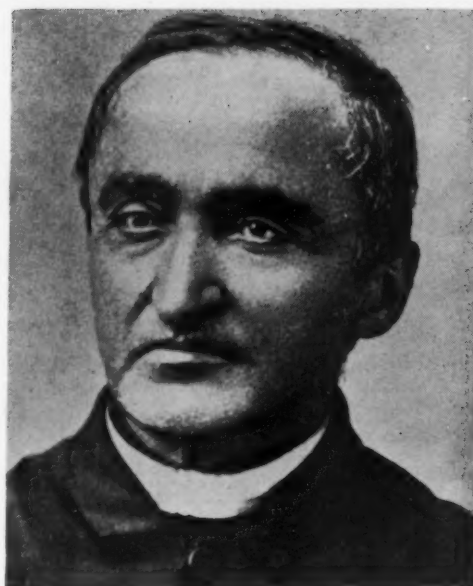
received as a landmark of the Mission site, the name of Priest's Butte, which still retains to the present day."⁹ Upon this first site Father Hoecken and his Jesuit companion, Brother Vincent Magri, built three small log houses. Having finished this heavy chore, they simply settled down to a winter of hard labor learning the Blackfoot language—a task almost as distasteful to them as being scalped. In October, Father John B. Imoda, S. J., arrived to share it.¹⁰

The long winter revealed more than Blackfoot prefixes and verbs. The site, though delightful in other respects as all present residents of Choteau will happily agree, was found to be unsuitable for a mission. So, on March 13, 1860, the three missionaries gathered their frugal possessions and moved to a new location on the banks of the Sun

⁹ Palladino, *op cit.*, p. 176.

¹⁰ Father John Baptist Imoda, S. J., born in Turin, Italy, on November 29, 1829, entered the Society of Jesus on April 22, 1854. He came to the U.S. in 1858 and arrived at the Blackfoot mission in 1859. He died in Helena on June 18, 1886.

FR. JOSEPH GIORDA, S. J., second founder of Jesuit Missions in Montana, was born in Italy in 1823 and renounced his considerable inheritance to become a Jesuit in 1845. He arrived in the United States in 1858 and with Father Imoda and Brother de Koch chose the site for St. Peter's in 1862. He died at Sacred Heart Mission in the Coeur d'Alenes in 1882.



river, a short distance from the future site of Fort Shaw.¹¹ Here they built two more cabins of logs like the first. Lacking the necessary farm implements and seed, they were unable to make a garden—a matter of grave concern. They understood well what it meant to live “on the county,” as the Indians lived: on fish, buffalo, roots, moss and berries. They had existed this way in the old mission for five months.

In August, while rumors of Blackfeet depredations filled the little valley, Father Congiato, S. J., the Superior, appeared at the new mission. He promptly ordered the project abandoned; probably, because the Indians did not like the site. He dispersed the small community's occupants, sending Father Hoecken to St. Louis and Father Imoda and Brother Magri to St. Ignatius, “294 miles by the great road.” Thus the second mission came to naught and the Jesuits were as far as ever from their objective.

The roaring sixties which followed were hard years in Montana Territory whether one lived at Fort Benton or somewhere else. The discovery of gold immediately attracted swarms of whites, not all of them graduates of a finishing school. Hot-bloods among the Indians (especially the northern Pie-gans who swooped down from Canada) greatly itched to annihilate the alarming influx as they would any pestilence. Inter-tribal wars also flourished. (Whatever the distractions there was always time to steal an enemy's scalp.) Most Blackfeet, Father Kuppens was informed by a wag from their winter camp, considered Black Robes as whites and therefore subject to liquidation, if need be, like all other whites. Other tribes conveyed the same general idea to the Jesuits, so the latter had no mis-

givings about their fate should they fall into hostile hands.

It was under these circumstances that three Jesuits, eager to establish a mission once and for all, returned in the autumn of 1861.¹² Fathers Joseph Giorda and Imoda and Brother de Koch arrived at Fort Benton on October 25th with the following instructions:

- “1. Proceed to Fort Benton, pass the winter studying the language of the Indians and attend to the spiritual wants of all the people in the vicinity.
2. Select a suitable site for the permanent location of the mission.
3. Once located, the new mission was to be called after St. Peter the Apostle.”¹³

¹¹ Father Francis Xavier Kuppens, S.J., corrects the account in Palladino's first edition of *Indian and White in the Northwest* in a manuscript entitled, “Notes on St. Peter's Mission.” This is in the Oregon Province Archives of the Society of Jesus. Written principally for the benefit of Father Palladino, the manuscript effectively produced corrections in the second edition of *Indian and White in the Northwest*.

¹² Father Joseph Giorda, S.J., was born near Turin, Italy, on March 19, 1823. The son of a wealthy noble family, he renounced his inheritance to enter the Jesuit Order on March 29, 1845. He came to the U.S. in 1858. Full of virtues, if not also in years, he died at Sacred Heart Mission among the Coeur d'Alenes on August 4, 1882. Brother Francis de Koch, S.J., was born on November 11, 1827. He entered the Jesuit Order on July 3, 1855 and died after sixty years on May 17, 1917.

¹³ Kuppens manuscript, p. 11. This is the first authenticated reference to the name of the Blackfeet mission and it certainly indicates that the previously established missions did not bear this name. Palladino states that the dedication to St. Peter was intended to honor the Jesuit General in Rome, Father Peter Beckx, S.J., a Belgian who was elected General on July 2, 1855; he died on March 4, 1887 at the ripe old age of ninety-three.

Father Giorda followed his instructions to the letter. Throughout the long winter, with Imoda and two brothers accompanying him, he scoured the country, finally deciding in favor of a location on the banks of the Marias river.¹⁴ This, too, seemed to have a voodoo cast upon it, for the tribal chiefs strongly objected to the Jesuits' occupying it.

"... but several of the chiefs strongly objected to having the Mission located there, and insisted with Father Giorda that it be established elsewhere. As the Father discovered before long, the Indians were quite diplomatic and reasonable about the matter. The Marias region teemed with buffalo which, the Indians feared, would be exterminated by the whites who were sure to follow in the wake of the mission. Hence they did not want it located in that section.

"Lest they should become alienated, Father Giorda thought it advisable to yield to their wishes. Accordingly, he and Father Menetrey, who a few months before had been called to work in this new field, started out again in search of a suitable Mission site."¹⁵

Father Giorda, with his pious entourage, again took up the search. This time he chose a site "on the left bank of the Missouri River, about 6 miles overland above the mouth of the Sun River, and the Indians true to their promise, followed and camped all around the mission."¹⁶

Father Kuppens composed a description of the exact place:

"When the location of the mission had been determined upon, in a general way; The Father preempted a small peninsula formed by a prolonged bend in the river. It contained about 175 or 200 acres of land. The neck was not more than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile wide; A short fence at this place would enclose the whole property. On the east a wide fringe of heavy cotton wood trees occupied about 40 acres. The remaining, about 150 acres were level, good loam, sufficiently

high to be safe from the spring floods and were good for farming or pasture. And it seems to me that opposite the extreme Southern end of the peninsula a small creek flowed into the river. At the north just outside of our fence the ground rose, gently at first, then steeper and steeper until at a height of about 100 feet it terminated in a heavy layer of rock. This was the edge of a high plateau. To the west perhaps $\frac{1}{2}$ mile beyond our preempted claim, a dry ravine with a gently ascent offered an excellent wagon road to the top of the plates. This we used to go to Fort Benton or to Helena."¹⁷

The Jesuits took possession of this site on February 12, 1862. Two cabins were erected immediately, then a third for a chapel, and finally the three were joined together into an "L" shape by the simple expedient of building two more cabins in between.

"All the buildings were well matched," says Father Kuppens, "all of the same material, green cottonwood logs, of the same degree of finish, they were not squared, and the bark had not been removed. The walls were $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, the interstices and chinking were plastered with clay. The roof was made of rails laid close together, with a heavy layer of clay. There was no ceiling in any of the rooms: and as for floor we had, when the buildings were new, a most delightful velvet carpet of a very dense sod. When the carpet was worn out as the very best will do in time, we walked on a clay floor. There was a porch, about five feet wide along the whole length of this incipient rectangle. In after life I have often wondered that there could be so much interior peace and consolation in poor surroundings. These were all the accommodations of St. Peter's in Dec. 1864."¹⁸

¹⁴ Brother Lucian D'Agostino, S.J., joined the group after their arrival.

¹⁵ Palladino, L. B., S.J., *Indian and White in the Northwest*, 2nd edition, Lancaster, Pa., 1922, I. 193. This corrected version follows Kuppens' manuscript account.

¹⁶ Kuppens, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23 sq. Page 24 was left blank by mistake.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27, sq.



CHIEF WHITE CALF (third from left) and members of his Piegan Blackfeet band are pictured at the Bauger Creek Agency in 1888, six years after White Calf and others had been baptized by the zealous Father Prando in his little log hut mission on Birch Creek. Abandoning surplus wives, the Indians received the sacrament from the Jesuit who was carrying on a personal war with Indian Agent John W. Young at the time.

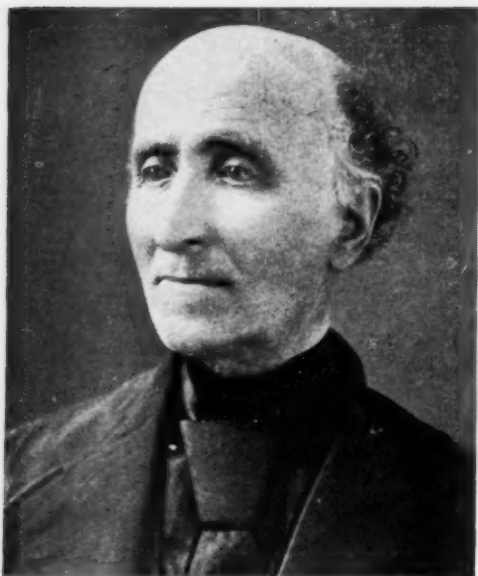
A curious detail of this palatial frontier establishment was a corral for horses directly outside the guest room. "Horses were borrowed sometimes during the night," says Father Kuppens almost apologetically, "to the great annoyance of ourselves and of our guests. By this arrangement each guest could keep his eye on his pony." This is doubtless one feature of St. Peter's that was little understood in Rome.

The Missouri was still frozen over when the mission was being built. This circumstance led to a grave mishap and a solemn vow which assured the Blackfoot nation of at least one friend among the Black Robes. One evening, so the accounts say, Father Giorda rather foolishly attempted to cross the ice on foot. It is not surprising that he fell through, since it was late February. When the ice gave way he had the presence of mind to extend his arms, and there he was, dangling in icy waters up to his arm pits, his feet carried by the current to the under-surface of the ice. His shouts for help were slower to attract the mission brothers than they did an Indian who lived near the mis-

sion (despite his un-Christian weakness for keeping a spare wife in his lodge). Bigamy fortunately did not prevent this redskin Casanova from casting a quick lariat to the precariously situated Black Robe. Saved from the Missouri's treacherous grasp, Giorda was convinced he owed his life to this Indian—which certainly cannot be denied. He solemnly made a vow to spend the rest of his life for the Blackfeet, at least insofar as Superiors allowed it. For his part the Indian, too, was thankful. Henceforth he took great care that every guest at the mission should be acquainted with all details of the rescue and should never forget them.

As if this were not enough adventure for one fortnight, Giorda fell into another equally dangerous and less dignified one, but not without an element of humor. Father Palladino, as usual, relates the details with a moral lurking somewhere:

"Father Giorda," he wrote, "set out with his interpreter to visit the Gros Ventres, and fell in with a war party belonging to the camp of Bull Lodge, one of the chiefs of the tribe. Both he



FR. ANTHONY RAVALLI, S. J., skilled physician, architect and missionary was one of the Jesuit stalwarts in the West. A monument to his architectural skill is the Coeur d'Alene Mission of the Sacred Heart at Cataldo, Idaho. He was at St. Peter's in 1864 and used his physician's skill to extract a Blackfeet arrow from the leg of Father Francis Kuppens. (Historical Society photo.)

and his companion were made prisoners, but the latter managed somehow, to escape. The marauders took from the missionary his mount and packhorse, provisions and all; and not content with this, they stripped him of the clothes on his back, to his very undergarments. Having relieved him of the cassock, the red flannel shirt he wore caught their fancy, and this, too, he had to surrender to his captors. No sooner had one of the band gotten [sic] it, than he put it on himself; but he was considerate enough to offer his own habiliment, a vermin - infested something without name, in exchange. It is stated that the thermometer at the Fort marked at this time forty degrees below zero; and how, under such conditions, Father Giorda did not perish with cold is truly remarkable.

"He managed, however, to make his way into the presence of Bull Lodge, who handed him a buffalo skin for a covering. The chief could hardly believe that he who stood naked before him and half frozen was a Black Robe. Not long after, horses, saddle, and some personal effects, namely, breviary, cassock and a pair of blankets, were returned to the missionary, but he was not permitted to remain in the camp."¹⁹

With these startling diversions, St. Peter's-on-the-Missouri got under way. Though raids and war parties continued to bedevil the frontier during the early years, the Jesuits achieved a nervous kind of stability which the chronicler called "progress." Father DeSmet, with his characteristic optimism, reported on this "progress" after a visit to St. Peter's in the late summer of 1862.

"On reaching the base of the Rocky Mountains, I met two of our Italian Fathers (Giorda and Imoda), and two coadjutor Brothers, who have settled among the Blackfoot tribes. This nation numbers about 10,000 souls. The meeting was unexpected on the part of my dear brothers in Christ, and the joy was all the greater. I found them in a rather bad way, lacking, in fact, almost everything, even necessities, and I had expected as much. Thanks to a remnant of the funds obtained in Belgium (in 1860-61), I was enabled to bring them assistance. I had the great consolation to find them safe and sound, and to procure for them, in good order, a fine assortment of church ornaments and sacred vessels, victuals for nearly a year, garments and bed coverings, which they sadly needed, agricultural and carpenters' tools, several plows, some picks and shovels, an ambulance and a wagon—all of which were absolutely necessary, in a new establishment among 10,000 nomadic savages, whom it is desired to christianize and civilize.

"These worthy brothers are laboring among the Blackfeet with tireless zeal and courage. At the time of my visit they had been barely six months in that country, and the number of baptisms inscribed on the register came to upwards of 700 children and adults. The Mission is dedicated to the Apostle

¹⁹ Palladino, *op. cit.*, 2nd edition, p. 195.

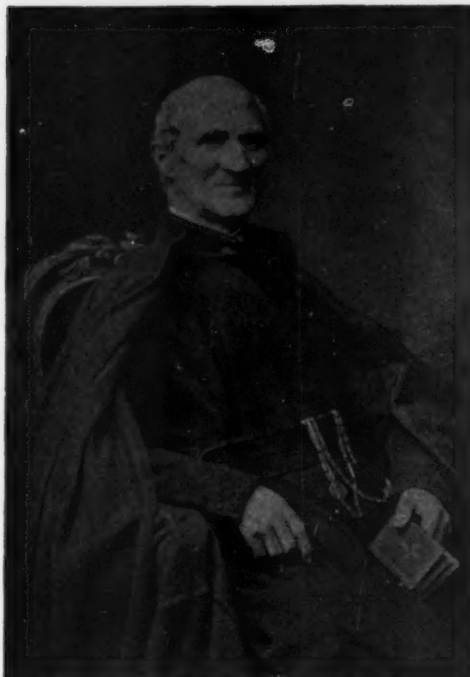
FR. PETER BECKX, S. J., the Belgian Jesuit who became the twenty-second general of the Jesuit Order in 1855, was the man for whom St. Peter's Mission was named, according to Fr. Palladino. Father Beckx died on March 4, 1887 when he was in his ninety-third year.

Peter. The number of Christians has grown considerably since my visit. The sight of this interesting little Christian community, growing so admirably in that far off desert, after centuries of abandonment, was to me a most consoling spectacle, showing the power of the Lord's grace over hearts so barbarous and but now so guilty—for the Blackfeet are considered the most barbarous and cruel of all the tribes of the plains."²⁰

In August, 1864, the distinguished architect-doctor-Jesuit, Father Ravalli, arrived. Since many Jesuit communities have at least one genius among them, it should not be surprising that one so challenging as St. Peter's should now have two, Ravalli and Giorda, one of the greatest Indian language scholars in the history of Montana.²¹ Augmenting the mission's good fortune, yet another addition to the staff arrived three months after Ravalli: Father Francis Kuppens, S. J., no great genius but a far-above-average Jesuit. This brought the number of the community to six—four priests and two brothers.

"I recollect well the evening of my arrival," Father Kuppens wrote at his Florissant, Missouri desk, exactly 50 years later; "and the first days I spent at the mission, the reception which the Indians gave me, the view of the Belt mountains, and of the Rockies: the immense plain, the majestic Missouri River which nearly encircled our place, remain vividly depicted in my mind; and in the evening I recollect, my attention was called to the roar of the waters of the Missouri at the Great Falls."²²

If Father Kuppens had expected adventure when he left St. Louis, he surely was not disappointed in Montana. Soon after his arrival, while returning from a missionary excursion,



a young buck tried to steal his mount. "Upon this," says Father Palladino loyally, "Father Kuppens gave the fellow a good wack across the face with his whip, and off he galloped as fast as the horse could take him. In the twinkling of an eye, the Indian had recovered from his surprise and with bow and arrow shot at the Father, hitting him in the calf of the right leg, where the missile stuck, till it was extracted by Father Ravalli at the Mission."²³

The little diptych described by Palladino presents a true-to-life portrait of the two Jesuit newcomers to St. Peter's: Father Kuppens, only twenty-six in years, fiery and energetic, and

²⁰ DeSmet's letter to Father Boone, in Chittenden and Richardson, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean DeSmet, S.J.*, Vol. II, p. 786 sq.

²¹ Father Anthony Ravalli, S.J., was born at Ferrara, Italy, on May 16, 1812. He entered the Jesuit Order on November 12, 1827. He came to America with DeSmet in 1844, bringing with him the trained skills of physician and architect as well as missionary. One monument to his architectural skill is the old Coeur d'Alene Mission of the Sacred Heart at Cataldo, Idaho. Ravalli died on October 2, 1884. Giorda's part in the composition of the *Kalispel Dictionary* is well-known. Cf. Schoenberg, Wilfred P., S.J., *Jesuit Mission Presses*, Portland, 1957, p. 18 sq. Giorda, as shown by this bibliography, had a major role in the composition of four other important imprints from the St. Ignatius Mission Press.

²² Kuppens, *op. cit.*, p. 22. He wrote this May 6, 1914, at the age of 75.

²³ Palladino, *op. cit.*, 2nd edition, p. 202.



the gentle Father Ravalli, a mellow fifty-two, pulling an arrow out of the priest-warrior's leg. Looking closely at the portrait you can see the younger man's impatience with the time required to extract so persistent a leech as an Indian arrow, and the older man's concern for the salvation of the rogue who attached it. Ravalli had already lived among the Indians for a ten full years.

A year later both had much medicine to practice. It seems that during the winter of 1865, a gold stampede into the Sun river area coincided with a particularly dreadful blizzard and cold spell. Many a miner had his ears, nose, hands or feet frozen. A number found their way to St. Peter's mission, where the scant accommodations were thrown open to them by the Fathers. Ravalli's skill saved many Irishmen that winter, and gold or no gold from the stampede, many another perished because the Ravalli's were scarcer than heavy nuggets.

FR. PHILIP RAPPAGLIOSI, S. J., son of a wealthy Italian family, became an assistant at St. Peter's in the winter of 1876 and during the next winter of starvation his health broke under the strain of trying to help his Blackfeet charges. His death, attended by some suspicion of murder, caused a great stir in Rome. A copy of a rare biography on his life is in the Oregon Province Archives in Spokane.

The Sun river gold rush was a prelude to disaster. Added to it was the severe winter and three excessively dry summers (1862-1865) which created other hardships; but another, a more-to-be-regretted factor, entered into the final chapter of St. Peter's on the Missouri.

Had the government's promises to the Blackfeet and the mission been redeemed, it is quite probable that St. Peter's might be on the Missouri today—another St. Ignatius Mission famed for its contribution to Montana history. But it is a sad fact, on record, that the government did little or nothing to keep promises solemnly made in councils and treaties. The Blackfeet had agreed to take up farming if the Jesuits located their mission on the Missouri. When St. Peter's was established, many of them moved their lodges into the general area where they awaited the ploughs, cattle, harness, seed, and so forth, promised in their treaties. None of it ever arrived.²⁴

The Jesuits, too, lacked these bare essentials for an agricultural economy. Though they had occupied fertile land, they could not put it to use. Their only garden was a one-half acre plot, spaded by hand and planted with seed provided by Father DeSmet. Gradually, as Father Kuppens observed, the Indians, disillusioned in pale faces' treaty-making, drifted away into the north country where they could jerk buffalo meat without great inconvenience. Actually, since they needed food to survive, they had no other choice.

If this was discouraging "progress," worse was to come. In the spring of

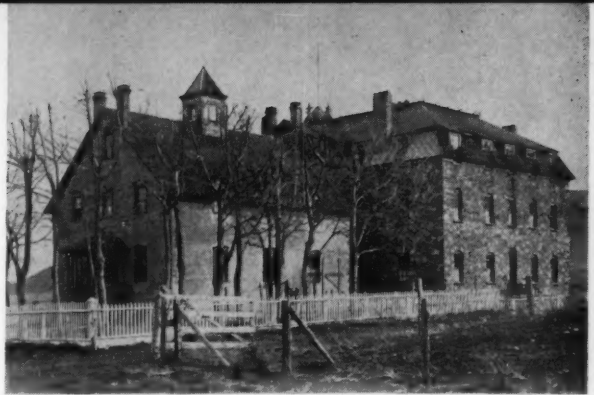
²⁴ Agricultural goods were promised the Blackfeet in Articles IX and X of the Blackfoot Treaty of 1855. Kuppens emphatically states that nothing arrived. "The mission itself was destitute of all those things. An abundance had been promised again and again, but nothing had been received." *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

BOYS SCHOOL and Jesuit residence buildings at St. Peter's Mission are pictured in about 1896. Fire, the recurring plague of the struggling mission, wiped out both buildings in January, 1908.

1866, what peace the mission enjoyed was shattered by the arrival of a squaw man, John B. Morgan, who earnestly begged the Fathers to give him refuge, saying that the Blackfeet were determined to kill him. Foreseeing the consequences, the Jesuits bravely accepted him. Then they speedily witnessed reprisals. First their ten head of cattle were shot, one by one, within sight of the mission. Finally the mission herder, John Fitzgerald, was murdered scarcely a quarter of a mile away. The Jesuits buried him at the foot of the bluff described by Kuppens. The same day, April 26th, Father Giorda arrived from Virginia City, whence he had been summoned. A conference was held "on the west side of the river," probably to avoid disturbances, during which Giorda inquired about developments on a previously selected new mission site. He was visibly relieved, says Father Kuppens who was present, when informed that new buildings were almost ready. With tears in his eyes, Giorda then announced that St. Peter's on the Missouri would have to be abandoned, "since prudence demanded it."

That evening, after a frugal and sad supper, Giorda gave the Jesuit community "a short but impressive exhortation" in the mission chapel. In the morning they bade farewell to their much-loved mission. Father Giorda, delayed by a final prayer at the place of his rescue, was the last to leave.

A new St. Peter's, prepared in anticipation of a possible grand climax on the Missouri, was about a day's journey southwest, half-way between the Dearborn and Sun rivers. This was the location of the famous Bird Tail Rock on the Mullan Road. Here the bone-like ruins of St. Peter's lie today.



During the previous autumn, Giorda had sent Father Imoda with a brother and a few workmen to prepare logs, stone and other necessary materials for a well-developed mission which was to include a school. Lumber was hauled from Helena for the project. The first visitor to the construction camp was General Thomas Francis Meagher "who had strayed from the Mullan Road in a blizzard, and landed in our camp, attracted by the barking of dogs." Other visitors during construction were a number of chiefs who not only expressed approval of the location but promised to send their sons to the school when it was ready.

Giorda and his Jesuits took possession of this almost completed establishment with heavy hearts. Because of past experience they knew full well how delicate was the thread on which its fate hung. Perhaps by the morrow it would have to be abandoned, like three other missions, to rot beneath Montana's bright sky.

On the 28th, the day after their arrival, four priests said Mass in the new mission, after which they took their breakfast with the two brothers. Then all in melancholy silence examined their buildings—for a first and last time. The decision had just been made to abandon this mission also, until the bloody wars between whites and Indians had spent themselves.

This decision was made by the Jesuit Superior, not so much to save his Jesuit scalps, which was a praiseworthy objective (though most, for the sake of martyrdom, would liked to have lost

them) but principally because Jesuit manpower was altogether too scarce to waste in a fruitless mission. Little results, not to mention "progress" again, could be hoped for before the frontier regained its peace. Hence Giorda ordered his men, "across the mountains to St. Ignatius" where there was work enough for three times their number. Giorda himself returned to Helena from which he continued to visit Blackfoot camps in fulfillment of his vow.

For eight years St. Peter's had "a lingering existence of rather a prolonged agony." Jesuits were careful to visit the place periodically to comply with all requirements of the law to establish legal title. Meanwhile their two previously occupied sites were preempted by the government for the use of soldiers, the one on the Sun river in the summer of 1866 to control developments during a gold stampede there, and the other on the Missouri shortly after the Jesuits closed it.²⁵

The strain of frontier tensions and of Giorda's responsibilities as Jesuit superior seriously affected his health. On September 11, 1866, he was relieved of his duties and Father Urban Grassi, S. J., was assigned to his position.²⁶ This arrangement was explicitly stated to be "temporary," that is, Father Giorda was to be relieved only long enough to recover his strength.

Father Grassi, an absolutely fearless and rugged missionary, aged thirty-six with eight years of mission experience at St. Ignatius, was apparently not well-disposed toward the foundation at Bird Tail Rock. About one year after assuming office of Vice-Superior he dispatched Father Joseph Menetrey, S. J., to the mission with orders to close the place.²⁷ Menetrey lived at the mission during the winter of 1867-1868, but before he had disposed of all the movables, he was suddenly recalled to Helena. Entrusting the mission to the care of Thomas Moran, he returned to headquarters in the summer of 1868. Several months later Father Gregory

Gazzoli, S. J., was ordered to examine the situation and to make a report on the expediency of re-opening the mission. He also spent a winter there, looking into all aspects of the case. He returned to Helena in the following summer with an unfavorable report.

Two other circumstances now conspired to complicate matters. First, on December 5, 1870, President Grant in his message to Congress announced his famous "Peace Policy," assigning the spiritual care of specific reservations to certain religious groups and restricting the activities of all others on those reservations. By this new policy Grant turned over the Blackfeet Reservation to the Methodists. Catholic missionaries were informed they no longer would be allowed to establish missions on the reservation. Since Bird Tail Rock was proximate to, but not on the reservation, Jesuit interest in the site picked up. Meanwhile Father Giorda had again assumed his office of superior on September 12, 1869. Thus the early 1870's were years of re-examining and wishful planning for the opening of St. Peter's. Finally in the early spring of 1874 Giorda considered the time ripe. He dispatched Father Imoda, his old comrade among the Blackfeet and the two veteran brothers of the mission to Bird Tail Rock with all-out plans for a boys' school for whites and a boys' "industrial" school for Indians.

²⁵ Palladino wrote: "Scarcely three days after reaching St. Ignatius last of April 1866, a special messenger arrived, sent by General Francis Meagher, and brought the General's request that Giorda, or in his stead, Father Kuppens with power of attorney, should come over without delay, in order to convey to the United States Military, the old St. Peter's Mission on the Sun River." Says Father Kuppens indignantly: "This is a mistake. The mission on the Missouri was the mission in question. I travelled with General Meagher from Helena to the mouth of the Judith River, was present at the conference of General Meagher with Colonel Raver, the commanding officer. General Meagher pleaded our cause very warmly, and I can positively affirm, that not a word was spoken about the mission on the Sun River. Our whole conference related to the site on the Missouri, where the houses could be used for storing their goods, and the peninsula was a most safe and desirable corral, for all the stock of the entire command. The offer was favorably considered, and a small band of soldiers occupied the place for two or three months." *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

²⁶ Father Urban Grassi, S.J., was born in Girola, Italy, on November 25, 1830. He entered the Society of Jesus on December 5, 1850 and came to the United States in 1853. His death brought on by overwork and pneumonia occurred at Umatilla, Oregon, March 21, 1890.

²⁷ Father Joseph Menetrey, S.J., was born in Friburg, Switzerland, November 28, 1812. He entered the Society of Jesus at the age of twenty-three, came to the United States ten years later and spent thirty years in mission and parish work in Montana. He died at St. Ignatius Mission on April 27, 1891.

FR. PETER PRANDO, S. J., energetic Jesuit who arrived at St. Peter's in the spring of 1880 and learned the Indian language thoroughly, baptized hundreds of Blackfeet and eventually incurred the wrath of Indian Agent Young by continuing to baptize Blackfeet at his log headquarters at the edge of the reservation. This photograph was taken by O. S. Goff of Fort Custer, Mont.

The three eager friends of the Blackfeet had scarcely taken up residence at St. Peter's when they received word that Congress had passed a law on April 15th establishing the new boundaries of the Blackfeet reservation north of the Birch Creek-Marias River line. This placed the southern border of the reservation about 60 miles from St. Peter's.

Determined to remain after so much effort and prayer in making their decision, the Jesuits sadly set about the grim business of survival. No longer were the villains in their lives Northern Piegiens who unexpectedly swooped down from Canada, but the much less personal evil of government policy; though it must be admitted, personalities in the form of traders or agents entered the scene and quite literally stole the show.

The first victim of the new era was Father Philip Rappagliosi, S. J., who arrived at St. Peter's as an assistant in the winter of 1876.²⁸ Buffaloes were plentiful that winter and the Indians feasted on their choicest tidbits without restraint. During the following winter, however, famine stalked treacherously among the tepees on the reservation as well as elsewhere; and terrible hardships, in which the Jesuits shared, became a daily ordeal. Indians went in search of buffalo carcasses left to rot the year before. "These they brought home with them, rejoicing, and they devoured them with an appetite which only a starving man possesses."²⁹ Father Rappagliosi, accustomed to the refinements and bounty of his native Italy, broke under the strain. He died on February 7, 1878, with the suspicion of his having been murdered clinging to his remains.



When the news of this well-known Jesuit's death reached Rome, three priests volunteered to take his place. All three, Fathers Philip Canestrelli, S. J., Joseph Damiani, S. J., and Peter Prando, S. J., spent many years in the missions of Montana. All became noted Indian language scholars and all presented manuscripts to the St. Ignatius Mission Press which printed them. There the resemblance ended.

Prando was not the first to arrive but he was the most energetic; and though he did not long survive the bitterness of the government agent's opposition, he left the most lasting mark upon the Blackfeet. Arriving at St. Peter's in the spring of 1880, he was first assigned the unpleasant task of learning the Indian language, a duty he undertook with so much vigor that he soon came to excel his companions

²⁸ Father Philip Rappagliosi, S. J., mostly distinguished himself with the holiness of his life. Born of a wealthy and noble family in Rome, September 14, 1841, at precisely the time Father DeSmet and his Jesuit confreres were founding the first mission in Montana, he entered the Jesuit Order at the precocious age of fifteen. He completed his studies in divers countries of Europe and came to the United States in 1873. Worn out by hunger, cold, fatigue and grief, he died February 7, 1878. His death, as has been noted, created a great stir in Rome and a biography, now a great rarity, was produced within a year: *Memorie Del P. Filippo Rappagliosi*, Rome, 1879. A copy of this book can be found in the Oregon Province Archives.

²⁹ Manuscript by an unidentified author, "The Apostle of the Blackfeet," in the Oregon Province Archives of the Society of Jesus. This contains details on Rappagliosi's life and work among the Blackfeet.

in the art of speaking and writing it. He also studied the English language and in periodic excursions to Fort Shaw and Sun River he had opportunities to practice both of these adopted tongues. In May, 1881, with his notes on the Blackfeet language in his saddlebag and with the thrill of a great challenge surging through his body, he picked his way north along the Lewis Range of mountains to the reservation. Going directly to the Agency at Badger Creek, twelve miles beyond Birch Creek, he requested an interview with the agent, Major John W. Young.³⁰ Young, a staunch Methodist, was seemingly very cordial. He approved Prando's remarks about the establishment of a school at St. Peter's for Indian boys and in conclusion he assured Prando that "I love the Catholic Priest. In fact my mother died a Catholic."³¹

From May until November when he was recalled to St. Peter's, Prando visited Indian camps all over the reservation, baptizing many of the children and promising to return to instruct and baptize the adults. Before leaving he built a log hut "36 foot square" on the south side of Birch Creek.

In the following May he returned. Many adults including the head chief of the Blackfeet, White Calf, having disposed themselves for baptism by abandoning extra husbands or wives, received the sacrament in Prando's little hut. Perhaps for this reason, as Prando claimed, perhaps not, Young turned against Prando. Thus began a personal war between the Catholic Black Robe and the Methodist agent. Young in a rage ordered Prando off the reservation at the end of May. Prando, with a saucy retort, obeyed the order and many sympathetic Indians followed him, establishing their camp on the opposite side of the creek from Prando's mission. From his fragile fortress Prando sallied forth as he wished, a Moses defying Pharaoh. He openly made forays into Young's domain, protesting that he knew his rights "as a

white man, knowing, too, that the Constitution of the United States grants religious liberty to all." On these defiant excursions, and in his little hut, he baptized 686 Blackfoot Indians, "as it were by contraband."

At this point another development favoring Prando's position took place. It is unlikely that Young knew of it, though it was, in effect, a loaded Jesuit cannon trained on his agency at Badger Creek. Father Joseph Cataldo, S. J., the contemporary Superior of the Rocky Mountain Mission, already a veteran of another Black Robe-Indian Agent battle on the Nez Perce reservation, canonically established the Birch Creek mission as an official Jesuit residence and assigned another Jesuit to assist Prando.³² He also ordered the Fathers at St. Peter's to increase the capacity of the boys' school by erecting permanent stone buildings. This was in open defiance of Young who, it was said, very much disapproved of the Blackfeet sending their children off the reservation.

If this were not rebellion enough, poor Young had to bear more. Louis Riel, the Metis rebel against the government Indian policy in Canada, now joined the Jesuit "rebels" at St. Peter's. Banished from Canada with a price on his head, Riel took a position as teacher at St. Peter's, in 1883. "The work was monotonous and elementary but he seemed to enjoy it, and satisfied his employers except when he talked politics which made them impatient, or when he discussed religion as he did occasionally which gave them alarm. He pleased the parents of the pupils and carried with him until he died various letters of appreciation which he received while he was a teacher."³³

³⁰ One lone voice has been raised in the defense of Major John W. Young for his part in the years that followed. Without doubt it is an able one and long awaited. Mrs. Helen B. West published her defense of Young in *Montana*, Vol. IX, (January, 1959), p. 2 sq.: "Starvation Winter of the Blackfeet." Most Jesuit writers were rather harsh on Young, who unquestionably had something in his favor in the dispute.

³¹ Quoted by Prando in a letter to Father Joseph Cataldo, S.J., which was published in *Woodstock Letters*, Vol. XII (1883), p. 305 sq.

³² This was Father Joseph Damiani, S.J.

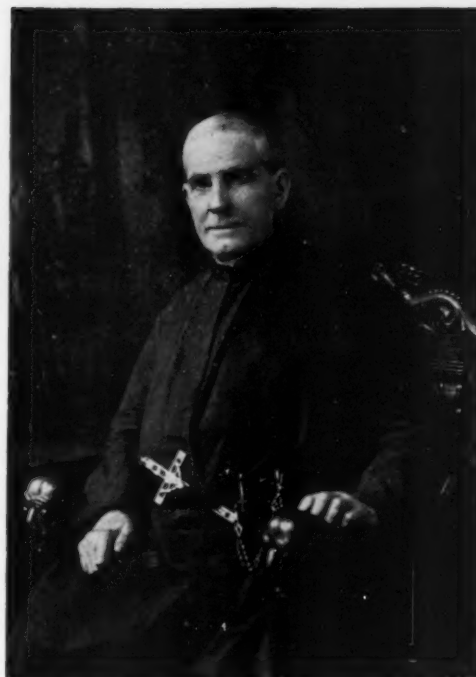
³³ Davidson, William McCartney, *Louis Riel 1844-1885*, Calgary, n.d., p. 129.

FR. JOSEPH CATALDO, S. J., Superior of the Jesuit Missions in the Rocky Mountain region from 1877 to 1893, was a veteran of more than one battle between the Black Robes and government Indian agents. He openly defied Agent John W. Young when he ordered permanent stone buildings erected at St. Peter's to expand the school for boys.

In mid-June, 1884, Riel left St. Peter's to answer a new summons of his people for leadership. He died the following year, on a government scaffold, and with him ended the anxieties of the Jesuits about his religious messianic complex.

Meanwhile, in 1884, Prando was moved to St. Ignatius Mission, probably because of the pressure brought to bear from Washington. Young, too, was relieved of his charge. So the two war horses retired from the field; the agent in silent moroseness, Prando as irrepressible and witty as ever. The work of both, as sometimes happens, went on as before. Prando's little mission subsequently developed into Holy Family Mission which eventually replaced St. Peter's.

At St. Peter's the boys' school flourished, in numbers if not in a material way, and the new superior, Father Joseph Damiani, S. J., began to agitate with higher-ups for the establishment of a girls' school under the Ursulines.³⁴ Protesting that "a mission school without nuns is no mission school at all," he finally had his way. On October 30, 1884, the distinguished Ursuline pioneer, Mother Amadeus Dunne, arrived by stagecoach from Helena with two other Ursulines. A fourth was summoned from Miles City. In short order Mother Amadeus had her school in operation with thirty little Indian maidens in residence. While a permanent stone convent and school were being erected, with funds partly supplied by Miss Katherine Drexel of Philadelphia, the nuns and their Indian girls lived in log cabins. These, you may be sure, were as spotless as convents everywhere, but the poverty they enclosed exceeded even that of the Jesuits. For seven years the Ursulines suffered it; then,



at the end of 1891, they transferred their few belongings to the new three-story Mount Angela which but proved to be a more sturdy shell for the same grim poverty. On January 1, 1892, Bishop Brondel of Helena said the first Mass in the new chapel, using an old piano for an altar.³⁵

With this "new look" Mount Angela assumed new functions. On the occasion of its dedication it was designated as the Motherhouse for the Ursulines of the West. A new academy for white girls became an added feature which unexpectedly developed into two permanent Montana schools.³⁶ By this time the Indian girls' department had become a "contract school" with the U. S. Indian Department paying \$9.00 per month for each of a specified number of children, a number which never

³⁴ Father Joseph Damiani, S.J., was born in Tivoli, Italy, on October 6, 1842. Having entered the Jesuit Order on September 28, 1859, he arrived in the United States in 1878. He died at Port Townsend, Washington, on June 24, 1922.

³⁵ Many details concerning the Ursulines at St. Peter's can be found in Mother Clotilde, O.S.U., *Ursulines of the West*, n.p., 1936.

³⁶ The present Ursuline Academy in Great Falls, established on this site in 1912, is a continuation of the original academy at St. Peter's. A second school, the College of Great Falls, had its beginnings in 1932 at the Ursuline Academy when Bishop O'Hara undertook its foundation with the aid of the Great Falls Ursulines.

equalled the total at the mission. For example in 1893 "of the one hundred and three children at St. Peter's the government paid for ninety."³⁷ Though meager, the subsidy put the struggling mission on its feet. At the beginning of 1895, its future appeared as serene and as secure as a Helena gold-plated bank.

But even banks go bankrupt and the blow that made St. Peter's insolvent was not long in coming. In the Secretary of the Interior's Annual Report for 1894 a policy of substituting government schools for contract schools was already under discussion and a 20% reduction in the amount allowed contract schools was suggested. Accepting this policy, the Senate Committee on Appropriations recommended that Congress in its Appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1896 limit aid to the contract schools and establish the principle that "the government shall as early as practicable make provisions for the education of Indian children in Government schools." This policy, which appeared to be very reasonable on the surface, was approved by Congress in 1895. As in the case of the establishment of the reservation boundary, there was no appeal. In the end it practically destroyed mission schools of all faiths; it cost the government countless millions of dollars over the years; it secularized a significant part of Indian leadership; and it produced a type of school that largely failed in its purpose for at least two generations.

Although this was not the first blow to strike St. Peter's, nor the last, it was surely the most unreasonable, since it denied the basic right of parents to choose their own school for their children. Almost immediately funds for St. Peter's were cut off and the Jesuits were forced to close their school. Father James Rebmann, S. J., the mission's superior, dispatched the last two Jesuit teachers to another mission in June,

1896. Then he, too, left to assume direction of Gonzaga College in Spokane Falls, Washington. St. Peter's was no longer a major mission.

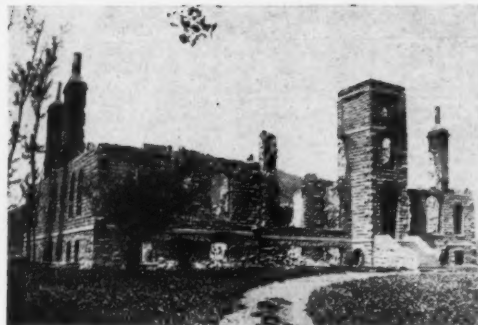
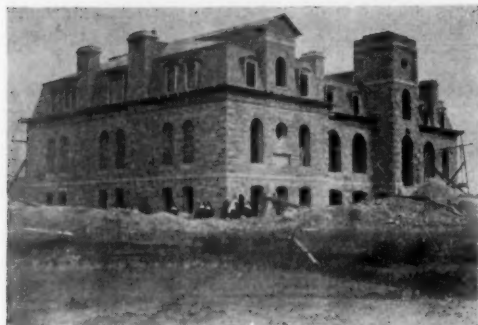
The Ursulines, committed to a broader program, could not so easily solve their dilemma. Fortunately their academy for white girls was flourishing. They received some, though not considerable, help from eastern friends and they drifted along, uncertain about the future and gravely concerned over their hand-to-mouth existence.

Two years passed in anxiety and indecision. Then the Jesuits, sick at heart and disturbed about their whole mission system, announced that they would abandon St. Peter's at the end of May, 1898. Henceforth they would concentrate on Holy Family Mission for the Blackfeet. They felt there was no other choice. At this time they operated four other mission schools in Montana besides Holy Family and seven other mission schools in the Pacific Northwest. As if this were not woe enough, they had recently been assigned to cover the entire Alaska Mission which had to be financed with something besides sunshine and fresh air.

The departure of the Jesuits left the Ursulines in a quandary. With so much at stake, their motherhouse and academy as well as the Indian girls' school, they could not bring themselves to abandon St. Peter's. Hard-pressed on all sides, they continued to struggle.

Meanwhile a pathetic little crisis arose when an Indian boy, brother to two girls at St. Peter's, was refused admission at the government school unless his sisters attended the government school also. The two girls begged the nuns to keep them and their brother also so the harassed nuns held a council and decided to open a boys' school in the buildings abandoned by the Jesuits. To staff it they had to employ male assistance which, of course, involved more begging and frugality.

³⁷ Mother Clotilde, O.S.U., *op. cit.*, p. 41.



MT. ANGELA SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, established at St. Peter's Mission by the Ursulines, is shown at the left in about 1891 shortly before its completion. At the right are seen the ruins of the building after a fire destroyed it in November, 1918.

In 1900 reorganization of the Ursuline Order provided for the establishment of a new Northern Province of the Order with its motherhouse in New York. This called for rearranging the situation at St. Peter's as well as a re-consideration of their school's future. While the nuns pondered this problem the old Jesuit buildings were destroyed by fire in January, 1908. Unable to rebuild, the nuns dropped this part of their program. Three years later another answer appeared in the form of a gift of land in Great Falls from John D. Ryan. The site, an excellent one for an academy, became the center of hopes and plans. Under the supervision of Mother Perpetua Egan, O.S.U., a splendid new building was erected and occupied in September, 1912. Thus another function of St. Peter's disappeared. Now only the Indian girls' school remained; and its existence was so tenuous that the appearance of a church mouse might have severed it.

On November 16, 1918, a more-than-mouse appeared. Another fire, devourer of missions, destroyed Mount Angela during the night. Nuns with their forty-two Indian maidens, most of them in bare feet and night clothes, hurried into the snow to save their own scalps. Nothing else was saved; everything gathered by the nuns with agonizing effort for thirty-three years disappeared in the roaring flames of a few bewildering moments. The Ursulines' loss was estimated at seventy-five thousand dollars.

The flames that destroyed the physical facilities also settled the question of their remaining in the valley of the Bird Tail Rock. There was no reason to rebuild. Those of the children who were not sent home were taken to Great Falls or were placed in other Ursuline schools of Montana. The Ursulines themselves were transferred to other houses of their Order where they took up new work while they probably philosophized about the fickleness of mission life and the advantages of being nuns.

Thus St. Peter's, as a mission, came to an inglorious end. Yet its original church, weathered and battered by continual use, standing like an anachronism of logs in a ferro-concrete century, still serves as a mission station of the Cascade parish of the Sacred Heart. A new bell-tower has been added at the front entrance to take the place of the original one which stood, precariously, for many years, at the center of what was formerly an L-shaped building. Its gleaming whiteness reveals the care which the Diocese of Great Falls has taken to preserve the old church. Hovering above it and all around it is a mystical kind of history, like the history of ancient castles where medieval battles were waged. This, too, cherished by those who have lived in the shadow of the church as well as by those who have gathered its relics, is profoundly worthy of preservation.



OLD WEST PROFILE

The West in Leather

The Justin Boot

THE JUSTIN BOOT is so steeped in Western tradition that it transcends the commercial and enjoys dictionary status. It all began in 1879 in a little Texas trail town called Spanish Fort with the arrival from Indiana of H. J. Justin, a cigar maker's son. After paying his wagon train fare from Gainesville, Texas, 20-year-old Justin had 25c in his pocket and a hammer and awl bundled under his arm.

Justin could hardly dream that three quarters of a century later his name would be defined this way in *Western Words, a Dictionary of the Range* by Ramon Adams: "Any cowman knows this word is synonymous with good cowboy boots . . . A few men have left their names to enrich permanently the vocabulary of the Westerner through the excellence and popularity of a necessary product. Among these are Colt, Stetson, Levi and Justin. Even Easterners by now know what these names represent."

When Justin arrived in Texas, he saw a brawling, sprawling Chisholm Trail town of 200 persons and 20 buildings, three of which were saloons. Named for a fort established by the Spaniards 300 years before, the settlement sat a mile from the Yellow Bank crossing of the Red River—a haven for law breakers who had only to "run for the river" to escape jurisdiction. On the other side, though, was Indian Territory, the Oklahoma of today, and sometimes it was debatable as to which side of the river meant safety.

Justin painted his sign—*H. J. Justin, Boot Maker*—on a tiny building that held a work bench, and started doing standard repair work, but it didn't bring in enough to invest in the leathers he needed to begin making boots. But a barber, Frank See, who was more solvent because he had hit town with an old pony and 65 cents in cash, loaned him \$35. In exchange, See was supposed to have received the first

pair of Justin boots. But that's a claim voiced by so many through the years that the actual recipient remains in doubt.

The word soon spread far and fast that Justin was making the kind of boots the cowboys wanted. Cowmen going up the Chisholm Trail to Kansas stopped by and got their feet measured. On their way back, they'd pick up their Justins, and soon others wanted boots made the same way.

Justin moved into a larger building and hired his first helper. Then entered the picture the wealthy Montana and West Texas rancher, O. C. Cato, who supplied the idea that revolutionized the boot business. He wrote to Justin that there were many cowboys in Montana who wanted Justins, but who couldn't get to Spanish Fort to be measured for them. There would be additional business, Cato said, for a man who devised a self-measuring method.

The result was the first self-measuring device—a package that included a cloth tape measure and chart with instructions for measuring. The idea eventually was copied by every other bootmaker, and it's estimated Justin would have made a million dollars had he patented the idea.

Justin had met and married Annie Allen, daughter of a Spanish Fort physician, and they sat around a kerosene lamp at night cutting out patterns for boots. For 10 years Justin made boots and prospered. But when the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railway extended its line from Denison to Henrietta, Texas, it by-passed Spanish Fort in favor of Nocona, 18 miles southwest. Justin, and practically the entire town of Spanish Fort, moved to Nocona. Some dragged buildings there on horse-drawn logs. The Justin Boot Company was set up in a one-story rock building and by 1908 when his sons, John Justin Sr. and Earl were his partners,



A far cry from today's modern Justin Boot Company factory at Fort Worth, Texas, is this picture of the factory at Nocona, Texas, shortly after the turn of the century. H. J. Justin moved his company to Nocona after the railroad bypassed near-by Spanish Fort, Texas. (All pictures from the Justin Boot Co. archives.)

the founder was selling more than 1,000 pairs of boots a year and sales topped \$12,000. Retail outlet selling was started, and with the advent of the plant's first piece of machinery, production shot up to 35 pairs a day.

Once, in 1916, disaster almost felled the company, but John Justin Sr. pulled the firm back. It was during World War I and materials couldn't be purchased. No one was buying, and business was almost dying.

John slashed prices, started the firm's first daily newspaper advertising and started selling boots directly off the factory racks. The "shot in the arm" worked, the business began to breathe again, and at the end of 1918, the company sales reached \$100,000 for the first time.

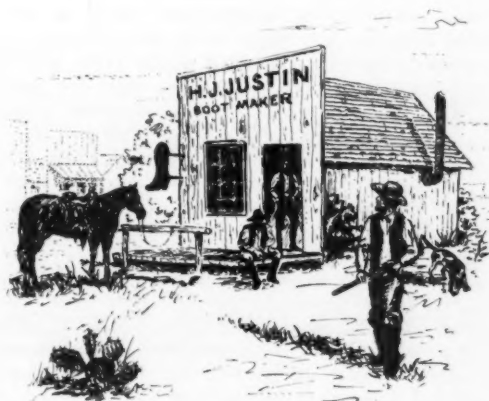
But it was also the year of H. J. Justin's death. Thousands of cowboys and ranchers, all wearers of his boots, mourned him.

The next year saw the appearance of the Justin Leather Goods Company in Nocona, devoted to the manufacture of fine purses, billfolds, key cases and leather novelties. Today, its first manager, G. W. Humphreys, serves as chairman of the board for the 15,750-square-foot plant that employs 90 people. Its vice president and general manager is Glenn Etheredge.

John Justin, Sr., who is now chairman of the board, recalls the bootmakers of the day as a colorful group

of men in a colorful industry. Most were transients, given to drink, who quite often drank up their week's pay and drifted to the next town on freight trains.

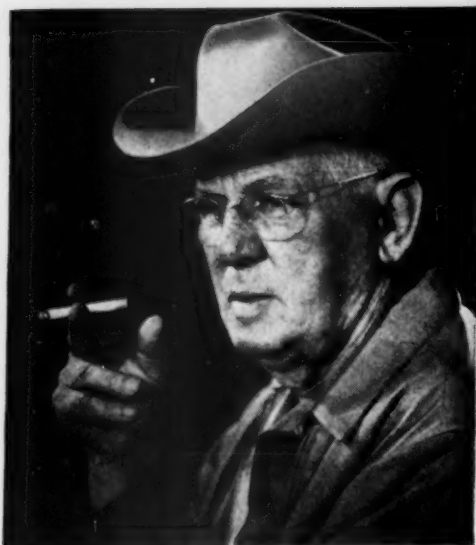
This was during the storied era of the Western badmen. And they needed boots, too. Often times H. J. Justin would see a "Wanted" poster bearing the likeness of a previous customer. And once, during



This was H. J. Justin's first boot shop in the little Chisholm Trail town of Spanish Fort, Texas. Gunfights were as common as cattle drives there when Justin started his business in 1879.



H. J. JUSTIN, a transplanted Hoosier, began making boots in 1879 at Spanish Fort, Texas. Today, 80 years later, the Justin Boot Company at Fort Worth, Texas, is the nation's largest manufacturer of quality cowboy boots.



JOHN JUSTIN SR., second in the line of three Justins who have operated the Justin Boot Company, is now chairman of the board. He recalls the early days of boot making as rugged ones, where many a cowboy died with his Justins on.

the Nocona period, three cattle thieves were strung up from a single tree limb near Wichita Falls. "The three rustlers died with their boots on," John Justin, Sr. recalls, "and all of them had on our boots."

By 1925, when the Justin Boot Company had passed the \$200,000 mark in sales, it became apparent that a move was necessary to Fort Worth, Texas, where better shipping and banking facilities were available.

In the first Fort Worth plant, a third generation Justin began working—under circumstances similar to his father who started washing for the factory workers when he was 6.

John Justin Jr. struggled under the weight of a bottle-loaded wash bucket, selling cold drinks to the workers. He says he had always wanted to be in business for himself. Later, while attending Texas Christian University, he worked part time in the plant, but this only intensified his desire to manufacture for himself. Shunning family aid, young Justin in 1938 borrowed \$1,000 from a bank and began the Justin Belt Company. The business was an immediate success.

The boot company moved to the South Side of the city "Where The West Begins," where it stayed until 1939 when it moved into its present two-story block-long building on the South Side. The 65,000-square-foot plant employs 250 people and turns out 1,000 pairs of boots a day.

In 1949, still serving as president of the Justin Belt Company, John Justin Jr. joined the Justin Boot Company. In 1952 he assumed the presidency, and today is president of three Justin companies—Boot, Belt and Leather Goods. John Justin Sr. was then named chairman of the board of the Boot Company.

Justin personality boots have become famous the world over. Unusual designs including brands, scenes and personal likeness, all have been crafted in leather by expert custom bootmakers. Many famed personali-

ties have worn specially designed Justins throughout the company's history.

Today, the manufacture of Justin boots is as unique as the footwear itself, involving sixty individual steps, more than 54 per cent still being performed by hand. The Justin design library is so complete that it is possible for a customer to order a duplicate of a design he had on a pair of boots purchased before the turn of the century.

And so, the idea of a Texas-Montana rancher, and the determination of an Indiana cobbler, all blended to make up the 82-year tradition behind the Justin Boot Company.



The current president of the Justin Boot Company is young John Justin Jr., a man vitally interested in preserving the history and traditions of the Old West. He serves Fort Worth, Texas, as the city's Mayor Pro-Tem.

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